United Nations S/PV.6288

Security Council

Sixty-fifth year

Provisional

6288th meeting

Friday, 19 March 2010, 10 a.m.

New York

President:	Mr. Issoze-Ngondet	(Gabon)
Members:	Austria	Mr. Mayr-Harting
	Bosnia and Herzegovina	Mr. Barbalić
	Brazil	Mrs. Viotti
	China	Mr. Li Baodong
	France	Mr. Araud
	Japan	Mr. Takasu
	Lebanon	Mr. Salam
	Mexico	Mr. Heller
	Nigeria	Mr. Onemola
	Russian Federation	Mr. Shcherbak
	Turkey	Mr. Apakan
	Uganda	Mr. Mugoya
	United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland	Sir Mark Lyall Grant
	United States of America	Ms. DiCarlo

Agenda

Central African region

Impact of illicit arms trafficking on peace and security

Letter dated 15 March 2010 from the Permanent Representative of Gabon to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General (S/2010/143)

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10-27987 (E)

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The meeting was called to order at 10.20 a.m.

Adoption of the agenda

The agenda was adopted.

Central African region

Impact of illicit arms trafficking on peace and security

Letter dated 15 March 2010 from the Permanent Representative of Gabon to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General (S/2010/143)

The President (*spoke in French*): I would like to inform the Council that I have received letters from the representatives of Australia, Botswana, the Central African Republic, Chad, Congo, Costa Rica, Democratic Republic of the Congo, Germany, Morocco, Republic of Korea, South Africa and Switzerland, in which they request to be invited to participate in the consideration of the item on the Council's agenda. In accordance with the usual practice, I propose, with the consent of the Council, to invite those representatives to participate in the consideration without the right to vote in accordance with the relevant provisions of the Charter and rule 37 of the Council's provisional rules of procedure.

There being no objection, it is so decided.

At the invitation of the President, the representatives of the aforementioned countries took the seats reserved for them at the side of the Council Chamber.

The President (*spoke in French*): In accordance with the understanding reached in the Council's prior consultations, I shall take it that the Security Council agrees to extend an invitation under rule 39 of its provisional rules of procedure to Mr. Antonio Maria Costa, Executive Director of the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime.

It is so decided.

I invite Mr. Costa to take a seat at the Council table.

In accordance with the understanding reached in the Council's prior consultations, I shall take it that the Security Council agrees to extend an invitation under rule 39 of its provisional rules of procedure to Mr. Sergio de Queiroz Duarte, High Representative for Disarmament Affairs.

It is so decided.

I invite Mr. Duarte to take a seat at the Council table.

In accordance with the understanding reached in the Council's prior consultations, I shall take it that the Security Council agrees to extend an invitation under rule 39 of its provisional rules of procedure to His Excellency Mr. Louis Sylvain-Goma, Secretary General of the Economic Community of Central African States; His Excellency Mr. Téte António, Permanent Observer of the African Union to the United Nations; and His Excellency Mr. Pedro Serrano, acting head of the European Union delegation to the United Nations.

It is so decided.

I invite the aforementioned representative to take the seats reserved for them at the side of the Council Chamber.

The Security Council will now begin its consideration of the item on its agenda. The Council is meeting in accordance with the understanding reached in its prior consultations.

I wish to draw the attention of Council members to document S/2010/143, which contains the text of a letter dated 15 March 2010 from the Permanent Representative of Gabon to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General.

I welcome the presence of the Deputy Secretary-General, Her Excellency Ms. Asha-Rose Migiro. I invite the Deputy Secretary-General to take the floor.

The Deputy Secretary-General: We have long known that the flow of illicit arms to Africa is largely made possible by the secrecy that surrounds it. We are thus grateful to the Gabonese presidency for convening a debate on this important subject in the Security Council. The Council has often addressed conventional weapons issues, most frequently in the context of specific crises and in the consideration of arms embargos.

In 1999, the Council placed the issue of small arms on its agenda and adopted a presidential statement (S/PRST/1999/28) emphasizing the importance of regional cooperation in tackling the

issue. Since then, the Council has repeatedly recognized the devastating impact of illicit weapons on international and regional peace and security, social and economic development, and civilians, women and children.

The Council has also stressed the need for measures to discourage arms flows in Central Africa. In the subregion, local demand continues to be sizable, especially from many militia and rebel groups. Limited national and regional capacity, porous borders and the spillover effects of conflicts in the region have impeded effective small arms control. As a result, Central Africa is awash with illicit weapons, exacerbating intercommunal violence, increasing cross-border crime and threatening ongoing peace and national reconciliation processes.

The illicit traffic in small arms and light weapons is never an isolated phenomenon. Weapons trafficking in Central Africa has complex links, not only to conflict, but also to a number of other criminal activities that undermine our efforts to engender social justice, foster the rule of law and ultimately achieve the Millennium Development Goals. The link between the illicit exploitation and trade of natural resources and the illicit proliferation in trafficking of arms has become increasingly apparent. This, in turn, has become one of the major factors fuelling and exacerbating conflicts in Central Africa.

The primary responsibility to eradicate this illicit trade remains with States. Measures taken by national authorities to promote disarmament and arms control programmes are commendable; so, too, are collective efforts through the Economic Community of Central African States. However, the challenge continues to loom large. In this regard, allow me to make three observations.

First, peace and security in Central Africa require a strong commitment by States in the subregion, together with State suppliers of weapons, to expand their individual and collective efforts to eradicate weapons trafficking.

Secondly, such efforts must include greater commitments by the States of the subregion to implement global instruments and to strengthen their capacity to identify and combat those involved in illicit brokering activities. These instruments include the United Nations Programme of Action to Prevent, Combat and Eradicate the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects, the United Nations Firearms Protocol, and the International Tracing Instrument. We also must support the adoption of an arms trade treaty at the global level and the implementation of community-based disarmament and confidence-building projects.

Thirdly, the States of Central Africa should make the best possible use of United Nations tools and expertise. The United Nations Office for Disarmament Affairs, for example, plays an important role in assisting States in the regulation of conventional armaments and in promoting disarmament and non-proliferation. The United Nations Regional Centre for Peace and Disarmament in Africa provides States, subregional organizations and civil society with technical advice and capacity-building programmes, including training, legal assistance and the elaboration of regional registers and transparency instruments.

The Secretary-General and I welcome the ministerial decision of the United Nations Standing Advisory Committee on Security Questions in Central Africa to mandate the Centre to assist in drafting the subregion's first legally binding instrument on the control of small arms and light weapons, ammunition, explosives and equipment supporting their manufacture. Other urgent priorities include stockpile management, the security of weapons and ammunition, and measures to control the import, export, transit and retransfer of weapons. More must also be done to build national capacities to mark weapons, keep adequate records and trace illicit ones, in line with international and regional standards.

It is well understood that weak regional and national regulatory and enforcement capacities to address illicit arms trafficking are associated with the structural causes of armed violence and conflict. Therefore, the decisions and actions of the Standing Advisory Committee are of great significance in tackling the tools of violence, designing ways to improve subregional security, and creating the conditions necessary to sustainable development. The Secretary-General urges the Security Council and all Member States to offer whatever assistance is needed to support States in Central Africa in achieving these goals.

I once again commend the Government of Gabon for its leadership in bringing this issue to the Council.

The President (*spoke in French*): I thank the Deputy Secretary-General for her statement.

At this meeting, the Security Council will hear a briefing by Mr. Antonio Maria Costa. I now give the floor to Mr. Costa.

Mr. Costa: In today's world, conflicts take place within rather than between nations, and are fought with light rather than heavy weapons. Arms are acquired on the illicit market, estimated globally at between $200 and $300 million a year, which is about 20 per cent of the licit arms trade. Africa, the arms smugglers' most profitable market, suffers the largest number of casualties because of it. I am therefore grateful to the Government of Gabon for placing this topic on the Council's agenda.

Demand for military-grade weapons comes from three sources: crime groups, combatant militias and regimes under sanctions. Supply also originates from various sources: stockpiles of nations undergoing regime change, defence departments' clearance sales of obsolete weapons, and manufacturers unwilling — perhaps because of corruption — to meet internationally agreed domestic controls.

Let me begin with demand, which certainly concerns Africa. First, crime groups derive major rewards from firearms. A handful of Somali pirates can hijack oil tankers; poachers with rifles equipped with night-sights and silencers plunder Africa's rare species; cattle raiders steal the livestock of entire villages; bandits hijack aid shipments; thugs in combat uniform compel young slaves to mine rare minerals; gangs assault, rob and kidnap nationals and tourists alike, in homes and at resorts. As a result, several countries in Africa tally the highest rates for crime, specifically murder, in the world.

Secondly, by acquiring military-grade weapons, combatant militias obtain the trappings and firepower of a military force in the attempt to gain credibility, even without a political cause. Double jeopardy is caused when, most commonly, rebels fund arms purchases by trafficking drugs and other resources in exchange.

Thirdly, regimes under sanctions need arms to perpetuate themselves, irrespective of domestic opposition and/or pressure from the international community, including decisions of this Council. Arms traffickers circumvent the embargos, handsomely rewarded by authorities that do not hesitate to bleed citizens and natural resources alike to honour payments.

In these troublesome hands, even small amounts of arms can undermine the socio-economic progress of a nation, break the State's monopoly on the use of force, and create a tipping point in political or military stalemates. One need only think of how the drugged-up kids of the Revolutionary United Front held Sierra Leone to ransom for a decade, or of the destruction caused by the marauding Lord's Resistance Army in Uganda for years.

In short, illicit arms fuel the violence that undermines security, development and justice. Of the 34 countries least likely to achieve the Millennium Development Goals, 22 — two thirds of the total — are in the midst of or emerging from conflicts located in regions that are magnets for crime, violence and arms trafficking.

What about supply? Small arms, unlike drugs and counterfeits, are a durable product. An attack rifle, such as the AK-47 or the M-16, can last indefinitely; it just needs ammunition. As a result, arms trafficking tends to be an episodic rather than permanent flow, but with a predictable pattern — from countries with large stockpiles to a region descending or pushed by traffickers into crisis. Most of these regions, of course, are in the third world.

The biggest stocks have been in Eastern Europe and the former Soviet Union. Indeed, in the 1990s, these stockpiles supplied almost every conflict, particularly in Africa, from A to Z — from Angola to Zimbabwe. A combination of factors has turned Ukraine, in particular, into a major arms supplier. It has huge stocks — there are 54 firearms for every Ukrainian soldier, as against the accepted world ratio of around 2:1 — and a large surplus of large planes, including oversized Antonov and Ilyushin models. With low regulation and high economic insecurity, we get an environment in which merchants of death can make millions — as portrayed by Nicolas Cage, Goodwill Ambassador for the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime, in "The Lord of War".

How can tons of arms, in large cargo planes, move undetected? The key is corruption at source, transit and destination. Although arms are smuggled across borders — for example between the United States and Mexico — most weapons are just shipped

through commercial channels, relying on fraudulent papers and corrupt officials. Corruption at the source — known as "point of departure diversion" — enables traffickers to use fake end user certificates for legal exports. Corruption at the "official" destination enables a legal shipment to be diverted to a different location. That is called post-delivery onward diversion. For example, the tanks, weapons and ammunition on a Ukrainian ship hijacked by Somali pirates in September 2008 were intended for South Sudan, not Kenya, as the papers said.

At the "true" destination — in countries, for example, in the Sahel and Central, East and West Africa — weapons are bartered for drugs and natural resources such as oil, precious stones, metals and timber. As a result, arms trafficking and organized crime fuel conflicts, and vice versa.

In conclusion, what can be done to curb illicit arms trafficking, in particular into Africa? The baseline is to promote development and security so as to reduce the demand for arms. To reduce the supply, more must be done to improve the safekeeping and destruction of stockpiles, not least within the area of the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe. How to curtail the illicit arms trade? There is no need to reinvent the wheel. The United Nations Protocol against the Illicit Manufacturing of and Trafficking in Firearms, Their Parts and Components and Ammunition, which entered into force five years ago to supplement the United Nations Convention against Organized Crime, provides a very strong legal instrument. I was glad to hear the statement by the Deputy Secretary-General in that connection.

The United Nations Protocol requires parties to adopt legislation to prevent gun diversion and to criminalize the removal of the markings on guns, keep records necessary to trace them, prevent the reactivation of disabled guns, promote cooperative regimes to monitor gun flows, prevent weapons theft and build law enforcement capacity across borders. Yet, there are only 79 parties to the Protocol, which is half the number of parties to the other two protocols of the Convention against Transnational Organized Crime, namely, on smuggling of migrants and trafficking in people. Of course, the Firearms Protocol has some very notable absences.

To cut the illicit flow of weapons, I urge States to use the Firearms Protocol to close loopholes in national legislation, tighten up regulations on weapons transport, develop regional databases on seizures, promote inter-agency cooperation within national administrations, profile suspicious shipments and share information with other countries to verify compliance with international agreements.

But that is not enough. All crime can best be combated by following the money trail. Arms dealers in particular swing between licit and illicit business, covering their tracks through complex arrangements of front companies that invest the proceeds from crime. I urge States to implement article 52 of the United Nations Convention against Corruption and article 7 of United Nations Convention against Transnational Organized Crime, which require parties to know their customers and reveal the beneficiaries of funds deposited into high-value accounts.

Arms trafficking is another pandemic. The therapy is known and the surgical instruments are available. I hope this meeting will spur Member States to use these tools to cut the arms flows that fuel conflicts, undermine States and enrich criminals.

The President (*spoke in French*): I thank Mr. Costa for his briefing.

I now give the floor to Mr. Louis Sylvain-Goma, Secretary General of the Economic Community of Central African States.

Mr. Sylvain-Goma (*spoke in French*): I thank you, Mr. President, for inviting me to be here. I would also like to acknowledge the presence of the Deputy Secretary-General.

At the heart of a continent in which instances of fratricidal war are the subject of the international community's concern, Central Africa has been a major source of crises for the past 15 years. Of the 10 countries that comprise the Economic Community of Central African States (ECCAS), seven are in post-conflict situations today, while the other three have not been spared the upheavals of political violence and runaway criminality. In that regard, the scourge of small arms and light weapons is a major factor in the proliferation and chaotic circulation of such weapons.

Because the source of such weapons cannot be verified, and because they are easy to use and can be easily transported, as Kofi Annan has said, those engines of untold suffering are everywhere. They can be found within families and States and along borders.

They destabilize family relations, ruin people's lives, undermine good-neighbourly relations between States and drain momentum from regional integration efforts. That is the dire picture that I wish to share with the Council of the problem of small arms and light weapons in our subregion.

In order to illustrate the scope of this phenomenon, people point to the fact that threats to the internal and national security of the States of the region far exceed the capacities of our countries and Community to eradicate them. Given their scale, gravity and widespread nature, the crises being experienced by the subregion have a cumulative effect. That includes the rise and growth of armed rebellion and criminal organizations, the proliferation of small arms and light weapons, drug trafficking, massive displacements of peoples, the deterioration in educational and health systems, poverty and promiscuity.

At the level of global security, Central Africa is home to six lawless regions, all of which are part of triangular borders: Chad-Central African Republic-Sudan, Chad-Cameroon-Central African Republic, Cameroon-Equatorial Guinea-Nigeria, Angola-Congo-Democratic Republic of the Congo, Central-African Republic-Congo-Democratic ; Republic of the Congo/Congo River, and the Democratic Republic of the Congo-Burundi-Rwanda/Great Lakes region. A closer look reveals that the porous nature of the borders is conducive to allowing rebel movements to fall back and regroup. That is a structural element of the chaotic circulation of small arms and light weapons. Moreover, such lawless areas remain infested by nascent rebellion movements and host to entire roaming armies following the end of a conflict.

The technical characteristics of those weapons reveal that nearly 80 per cent of them come from either China or the countries of the former Warsaw Pact. Traffickers exploit the ease of using and maintaining such weapons, which means that there are endless sources of them. There are also numerous stockpiles of such weapons — of the armies and defence forces of States in crisis, those who support rebel movements and international arms dealers. Recently, fundamentalist religious movements in the Cameroon-Nigeria-Equatorial Guinea and Chad-Sudan-Central African Republic triangles have also been the source of small arms and light weapons.

All sectors of society possess these weapons. Worse yet, that includes women and children. This is leading to a new social conflict involving the traditional family structure. That alarming development has prompted the organs of the Council for Peace and Security in Central Africa (COPAX) and the institutions of the international community to take action to reduce the phenomenon.

With regard to actions taken at the regional level, the heads of States of Central Africa have, through the Yaoundé process, turned to the United Nations for assistance in order to prevent, control and settle conflicts in the subregion. That led to establishment of the United Nations Standing Advisory Committee on Security Questions in Central Africa, in 1992. Subsequently, as a result of the Committee's work, an historic decision was taken in Yaoundé in July 1999 to establish the Council for Peace and Security in Central Africa, which was set up in February 2000, in Malabo, Equatorial Guinea.

With regard to the matters being debated, the Protocol on COPAX includes the following issues in its article 6: combating cross-border crime, international terrorism, the uncontrolled proliferation and illicit trafficking of arms, ammunition, explosives and all other related materials. Since then, at the instigation of the former Organization of African Unity, the Economic Community of Central African States has been acting with a double view: responsible support to international community initiatives, and taking subregional initiatives.

With regard to supporting initiatives of the international community, the Central African States adopted, as part of Africa's contribution to the United Nations Programme of Action to Prevent, Combat and Eradicate the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects, the Bamako Declaration of 2000. They established, in 2003, the programme on Central Africa's priority activities to implement the United Nations Programme.

Concerning subregional initiatives, I will note that, on the basis of that Programme, the ECCAS secretariat, with the support of the United Nations Standing Advisory Committee on Security Questions in Central Africa, held a seminar in Bangui, in August 2002, on raising awareness of the implementation of the United Nations Programme in the ECCAS region.

Then, from 12 to 14 May 2003, the implementation seminar was organized in Brazzaville.

The results of that seminar led to adoption of a body of recommendations that the States have committed themselves to implement. I shall refer to eight of them: establishing in each State a national commission on small arms and light weapons; collecting and openly destroying small arms and light weapons used by rebels and other armed groups; strengthening and harmonizing national legislation and procedures on small arms and light weapons; enhancing the capacity of national security institutions to control small arms and light weapons; promoting traceability by creating registers and databanks; promoting the role of civil society in combating the proliferation of small arms and light weapons; implementing a regional policy of cross-border cooperation to combat proliferation of small arms and light weapons; and lastly, establishing an entity on small arms and light weapons within the secretariat of the Economic Community of Central African States.

At the level of the global collective security strategy of the Council for Peace and Security in Central Africa, actions have been taken to address threats in the lawless areas I noted earlier, starting with the cooperation agreement on police that was signed in April 1999 in Yaoundé among member States of the Committee of Police Chiefs of Central Africa. To complete that system, the 2007 Sao Tome and Principe initiative mobilized the Economic Community of Central African States to create a legal instrument for the community to combat the proliferation of and illicit trade in small arms and light weapons, which will be adopted in the near future.

That approach, which aligns legal instruments with an operational approach, sees the secretariat of the Economic Community of Central African States in the central role in controlling the circulation of small arms and light weapons in the subregion, along with the United Nations and the African Union, of course. The approach not only fosters harmonization and strengthening of regulations and institutions, but also insures the promotion of exchange of information for greater effectiveness of the actors in the field.

Here it is appropriate to emphasize the encouraging results attained, in barely six months, in a test of the implementation of the strategy to secure the vital interests of the member States of the Economic Community of Central African States in the Gulf of Guinea.

As the Council is aware, for many years the triangle of Cameroon, Equatorial Guinea and Nigeria has been the target of many acts of maritime piracy that have led to fears of the phenomenon of "Somalization" of this zone, which is strategic to the global supply of energy and to international trade. During joint patrols at sea and along the coast, hundreds of arms and considerable quantities of ivory, drugs and the proceeds of illegal fishing and other illicit products have been seized.

Moreover, in most States in post-conflict situations, national disarmament, demobilization and reintegration (DDR) programmes have been implemented as part of strategies to emerge from conflict. Reducing the circulation of small arms and light weapons and controlling acquisitions and existing stockpiles have thus become a major part of the process to collect arms and to demobilize and reintegrate ex-combatants. But the DDR process is still far from satisfying our expectations, as it has not yet addressed the matter of criminal organizations, which are becoming more and more organized.

It is important to emphasize that after the conflicts in Angola, Burundi, the Republic of the Congo, the Central African Republic and the Democratic Republic of the Congo, it has not been possible to recover all of the arms used in those conflicts. Taking all those countries together, one may estimate — and this is only an estimate — that about 7 million small arms and light weapons, including those manufactured and acquired, have been in circulation in Central Africa over the past 15 years. Only 45 per cent of them have come under effective monitoring or have been destroyed.

That means that a majority of the arms remain hidden for various reasons, including the possibility of a return to confrontations; illicit trafficking for commercial purposes; armed banditry, which often involves rape, hijacking, poaching, drug trafficking, pillaging of minerals and forest resources in the Congo Basin, crimes of passion and maritime piracy. I could continue. They are also used for poaching for the wildlife trade and in illegal fishing activities, where explosives are often used.

That is why disarmament, demobilization and reintegration programmes and programmes to combat

small arms and light weapons, usually carried out with the aid of the United Nations Development Programme and the European Union, are now closely linked to the problem of security sector reform and involve cooperation among State and non-State actors at the local and subregional levels. The policy of reforming the security sectors of Central African States requires their security and defence forces to commit to strict control of the weapons they own. Furthermore, under the aegis of the African Union Border Programme, a ECCAS border programme was adopted in May 2009. The third pillar of this programme seeks to ensure cross-border security and the fight against the trafficking of small arms and light weapons, which are a factor undermining neighbourly relations destabilizing economic development.

After a period of latency, during which the subregion was profoundly affected by its numerous conflicts, ECCAS, relaunched in 1999, now has as its primary mandate the task of re-establishing stability, peace and security. To that end, the goal of combating and eliminating the proliferation and uncontrolled circulation of small arms and light weapons is now ensconced on our agenda.

Looking to the future, the community's efforts in this area will be focused on finalizing the legal instrument and its adoption by member States; boosting the active participation of national commissions on small arms and light weapons; implementing the border programme, especially in the area of cross-border security; drawing up and implementing a police cooperation mechanism to address the issue of the six lawless zones; operationalizing the Gulf of Guinea securitization strategy in coordination with the Economic Community of West African States and, of course, with our international partners; implementing the policy of security sector reform in order to ensure that State armaments are traceable; providing support of all types to ensure the success of disarmament, demobilization and reintegration processes at rates of around 90 per cent by 2015; and strengthening civil society organizations with regard to information, awareness-raising and social networking. In order to achieve this ambitious project, our community is appealing to our international partners for their valuable assistance.

In conclusion, I should like to emphasize that ECCAS believes that combating the proliferation and illicit trafficking of small arms and light weapons is part and parcel of the comprehensive collective security strategy of the subregion. In that regard, we need to examine the chain linking the production and import of such weapons through to their use for criminal ends. Gaining the capacity to trace and control small arms and light weapons is thus an important part of our approach. Furthermore, a policy of crisis prevention, management and settlement, along with subregional and international police cooperation, will furnish the basic means of dealing with these problems. We therefore need to deploy all our human ingenuity by working to prevent problems early in the chain and through concrete action on the ground on the legal, political and technological levels.

If, however, we abandon the social and economic dimension, which fuels asymmetrical conflicts, all such efforts will be in vain. That is why our subregion believes that combating small arms and light weapons is one of the major pillars of the Millennium Development Goals.

The President (*spoke in French*): In accordance with the understanding reached among Council members, I wish to remind all speakers to limit their statements to no more than five minutes, in order to enable the Council to carry out its work expeditiously. Delegations with lengthy statements are requested to circulate their texts in writing and deliver a condensed version when speaking in the Chamber. I now give the floor to the members of the Security Council.

Mr. Onemola (Nigeria): I, too, would like to welcome Deputy Secretary-General Asha-Rose Migiro and Mr. Antonio Maria Costa, Executive Director of the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime, as well as Mr. Louis Sylvain-Goma, Secretary-General of the Economic Community of Central African States.

We appreciate your initiative, Mr. President, in organizing this thematic debate on the impact of illicit arms trafficking on peace and security in Central Africa. Your concept paper has proved valuable in facilitating discussion on this topical issue.

Illicit arms trafficking has a profound impact on peace and security in Africa in general, and in Central Africa in particular. It undermines good governance and disrupts trade, tourism and investment. It jeopardizes economic development and generally puts democracy and development at risk. Illicit small arms also heighten inter-State conflicts and put the nation-State system itself under attack. With armed guerrilla

groups proliferating and often dividing into warring factions, internal instabilities increasingly tend to evolve into larger regional wars. Cross-border support for insurgent movements is also on the rise. Large-scale wars are ongoing in some parts of Africa, resulting in millions of internally displaced persons. The role of natural resources in fuelling conflicts in the region can never be overemphasized. Fighters on all sides benefit from mineral wealth, while arms merchants are only too happy to keep the fighters supplied as long as they partake of that wealth.

I should like to suggest five areas where efforts should be directed in tackling illicit arms trafficking in Central Africa and other parts of the continent.

First, there is a need to strengthen national and subregional mechanisms to combat the illicit trade in small arms and light weapons. The experience of the West African subregion provides an important lesson in this regard. To consolidate peacebuilding and reconciliation in the subregion, the heads of State and Government of the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) decided to transform the moratorium on the importation, exportation and manufacture of light weapons into a legally binding instrument, known as the ECOWAS Convention on Small Arms and Light Weapons, Their Ammunition and Other Related Materials. The Convention seeks to control, regulate and prohibit the transfer, manufacture and possession of small arms and light weapons. The subregion has been able to develop a plan of action, the ECOWAS Small Arms Control Programme, and also encourage the establishment of national focal points.

Secondly, in order to prevent weapons from ending up in the hands of those prohibited from receiving them, we believe that Governments must adhere to regional and international arms embargoes. They must start to sanction violators, as contraveners of arms embargoes have been able to act with impunity. The United Nations should redouble its efforts to closely monitor compliance, supervise enforcement and suggest persuasive measures to enhance compliance.

Thirdly, to end the impunity under which arms brokers operate, States should adopt an international arms trade treaty, which would provide common international standards regarding the practices of arms brokers. There is currently no uniform practice, with the result that arms brokers can change locations to avoid prosecution under one country's laws by doing business in and through other, less regulated countries. Such a treaty would ensure that middlemen cannot move weapons from conflict to areas free of conflict for fear of prosecution.

Furthermore, on the issue of standards, an international treaty that provides criteria on exports is needed in order to prevent arms from getting into the hands of abusers of human rights and international humanitarian law. International standards that determine eligibility requirements for arms exports would prevent arms from entering the illegal market and from falling into the hands of those likely to divert or use them for nefarious purposes.

Lastly, national Governments, especially those of arms-exporting States, must strengthen and use monitoring mechanisms in order to prevent legal sales from being diverted into the parallel market. End-use monitoring ensures that exported weapons are used properly and that exploiters follow all laws, policies, regulations and procedures, thus verifying that a foreign Government or the authorized foreign recipient of defence articles is using and controlling them in accordance with the terms and conditions of a transfer. Because many countries have non-existent or weak end-use monitoring provisions, international standards that require end-use monitoring are the most systematic and complete basis. Onboard pre-shipment and post-shipment points are required. In addition, a common international end-used certificate that cannot be easily forged or duplicated must be developed.

Finally, I would like to thank Gabon for the draft presidential statement, and affirm our support for its adoption at the end of this debate.

Mr. Mugoya (Uganda): I would like to start by welcoming the participation of Deputy Secretary-General Asha-Rose Migiro, and to thank her for her statement. I also thank Mr. Antonio Maria Costa and Mr. Louis Sylvain-Goma for their statements.

The proliferation of small arms and light weapons has had a devastating impact on peace and security in Africa, and Uganda therefore thanks you, Mr. President, for organizing a debate on that important matter. We now know that the proliferation and illicit trafficking of small arms and light weapons are not the direct causes of conflict, but rather significant factors that fuel and sustain conflicts between and within States. Not only do they make

those conflicts more lethal, but they also make efforts and the peaceful resolution of conflicts more difficult. The greatest impact of all is on human security and the socio-economic development of States.

Africa, like other parts of the world, has continued to receive and recycle arsenals of arms to devastating effect. In some parts of Africa, such as Central Africa, the Great Lakes region and the Horn of Africa in particular, we have seen how the easy availability of small arms and light weapons has been a major destabilizing factor. Several of the conflicts in those areas are fought principally with small arms, whose low cost, ease of use and maintenance make them very popular. Such weapons also fuel crime and violence, displace civilians and undermine their rights. In the Central and East African regions, small arms and light weapons constitute a serious threat to peace, reconciliation, safety, security and sustainable development.

Small arms have also had an impact on low-intensity conflicts, such as those between communities in the border areas. In the pastoral communities bordering Kenya and the Sudan, as well as those bordering Kenya and Somalia, in the border areas of northern and eastern Uganda, and also in parts of the Kenyan border, cattle-rustling has had a long history due to aspects of the pastoral nomadic culture. The proliferation of small arms, particularly automatic and semi-automatic weapons, has all of a sudden made traditional cattle-raiding more deadly than ever before.

The illegal trade in natural resources in Central Africa has also heightened the illicit trade in small arms. Those new dynamics are a serious threat to peace, stability and the socio-economic development of the entire subregion. Illicit arms trafficking has also increased the incidences of armed violence, particularly in the urban centres in the region. It is now evident, too, that small arms and light weapons also play a role in facilitating and fuelling other illegal cross-border activities, such as drug trafficking and the trade in endangered species. Regional cooperation and coordination are therefore necessary so that programmes, activities or initiatives linked to that challenge are regional in scope and utilize regional institutions.

African Governments have initiated various mechanisms aimed at addressing the problem of proliferation and the abuse of such weapons. One such initiative is the Nairobi Declaration on the Problem of the Proliferation of Illicit Small Arms and Light Weapons in the Great Lakes Region and the Horn of Africa. The signatories to the Declaration include Kenya, Somalia, the Sudan, Ethiopia, Burundi, Rwanda, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Uganda, Tanzania and Djibouti. Those countries are tasked with ensuring that they take appropriate national measures aimed at addressing the problem of small arms and light weapons. The Declaration reflects the cross-border dynamic of conflict, instability and small arms proliferation and provides for an agenda for action and an implementation plan.

As part of its efforts to fight the illicit proliferation of arms and light weapons, Uganda has established a national focal point on small arms and light weapons under the Ministry of Internal Affairs to coordinate, combat and control the proliferation of firearms. A national firearm marking exercise is under way in the country, beginning with those firearms under the police and the army. Uganda also continues to implement collection and disposal measures and, since 2008, has disposed of more than 4,700 pieces of recovered illicit arms and light weapons. Currently, a countrywide firearms stocktaking exercise is being conducted within the police and armed forces to determine surplus stocks and serviceable and commissioned small arms and light weapons for final disposal.

Significant progress has been made in the Great Lakes region to strengthen controls on small arms and light weapons. It is encouraging to note that all countries have now established national focal points and are at different levels of implementing the action plan. To date, over 200,000 illicit small arms and light weapons have been destroyed in the subregion.

Now, the challenge is how Governments in the region can maintain the existing momentum. The efforts undertaken to improve cross-border cooperation and the enhancement of reinforcement capacity must be built on. The legal protocols on small arms control must be signed, ratified and implemented. Furthermore, the initiatives taken to improve weapons collection and stockpile management, ensure the effective demobilization and reintegration of former combatants, raise awareness in communities of the dangers of small arms, and, above all, reduce the *demand for weapons need to be intensified*.

One major challenge is how best to coordinate the various national initiatives among countries with different levels of resources, legal systems and institutional and technical capacity. Another major challenge to regional efforts has been the lack of resources.

Finally, in a region with porous borders and with people still living in conditions of poverty, efforts to reduce small arms and light weapons by States on their own are likely to have little or no impact. We wish to underscore once again the importance of a regional approach and focus in addressing this problem and the need for increased support of the international community in order to give greater assurance of human security and socio-economic development to States within Africa. Uganda therefore commends the countries in Central Africa for pursuing this regional approach.

Mr. Apakan (Turkey): The excessive accumulation and uncontrolled spread of small arms and light weapons pose a complex set of risks and threats to the security of States and their citizens. This is particularly the case in Central Africa. We therefore welcome the initiative taken by Gabonese presidency to have an open discussion on this issue today.

I also thank Deputy Secretary-General Asha-Rose Migiro and Mr. Antonio Maria Costa, as well as Mr. Louis Sylvain-Goma, for their comprehensive and insightful presentations.

It is estimated that 90 per cent of civilian casualties in modern conflicts around the world are caused by small arms. The Great Lakes region of Africa has been the most tragic example of that. In 1994, more than 800,000 people were murdered in Rwanda, mostly with small arms, including machetes. An estimated 300,000 civilians have also lost their lives the same way in Burundi. In the Democratic Republic of the Congo, the death toll used to average 2,600 per day. The instances of tribal and ethnic violence in Southern Sudan, which seem to be on the rise, and general lack of security in the triangle between Chad, the Central African Republic and Southern Sudan are also fuelled by the overabundance of small arms and light weapons.

The availability of small arms and light weapons also results in protracted armed conflicts, which are among the greatest obstacles to human development and a major cause of mass poverty, as such conflicts decimate economies and dislocate societies. For instance, in the Democratic Republic of the Congo the civil war has resulted in 4 million deaths that can be attributed to malnutrition and disease.

In addition, the proliferation of these weapons makes the peacekeeping and peacebuilding efforts of the international community in various parts of Central Africa not only more difficult, but also highly dangerous. There is also a well documented relationship between the illicit trade in small arms and terrorism and other acts of organized crime.

It is of course the responsibility of every State to protect its citizens from the danger posed by the illicit trafficking and unauthorized use of arms and weapons. However, the transboundary nature and the magnitude of the threat warrants strong cooperation and coordination among States, as well as a multidimensional approach that deals with the problem at the local, national, regional and international levels simultaneously. In this context, we welcome regional initiatives that address this problem, such as the establishment of a subregional register of small arms in Central Africa.

Furthermore, not all States have the necessary capabilities to deal with this problem. Therefore, capacity-building emerges as an important component of the struggle in this field. In Central Africa in particular, we should expand foreign aid programmes that seek to eradicate the illicit arms trade in the subregion and do our utmost to help strengthen the capacities of States and indigenous organizations, such as the Economic Community of Central African States. In addition to bilateral aid programmes, United Nations offices also have an essential role to play in the coordination and implementation of relevant programmes, together with local authorities.

Turkey favours a comprehensive approach in dealing with this problem and thus remains committed to the effective implementation and further strengthening of the United Nations Programme of Action to Prevent, Combat and Eradicate the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects. We also support the elaboration of more effective international norms and standards. Within this framework, we support the conclusion of an arms trade treaty, which should halt unregulated and uncontrolled trade in conventional arms worldwide and establish common standards for their global trade.

Moreover, reinforcing border and customs controls, as well as controls on brokering, licensed production and end use of small arms and light weapons, is indispensable for the prevention of illicit arms trade. Upholding existing arms embargoes and export bans, improving the security and management of stockpiles of arms and ammunition, and further promoting disarmament within the context of disarmament, demobilization and reintegration programmes would also contribute to these efforts.

Finally, transparency and information-sharing would certainly help promote consistency in the implementation of agreed multilateral standards. We therefore attach importance to the fulfilment by United Nations Member States of their reporting requirements within the United Nations on their small arms activities.

In conclusion, illicit arms trafficking continues to pose a significant threat to international peace and security, which can be tackled only through our collective efforts. The Central African region, in particular, presents a prime example of this grim reality. I hope and believe that our meeting today and the draft presidential statement, which we fully support, will re-energize our endeavours in the right direction. For its part, Turkey is certainly committed to contributing to all relevant efforts.

Mr. Takasu (Japan): We applaud the initiative of Gabon to convene this debate on the issue of illicit arms trafficking in the Central African region. We welcome the presence of Deputy Secretary-General Migiro, Mr. Costa and Mr. Duarte. We also welcome the Secretary General of the Economic Community of Central African States and thank him for his statement.

The countries in the Central African region are not producers but importers of small arms and light weapons. Large numbers of small arms are imported illicitly and frequently traded for revenue from the natural resources of the region. Due to weak control systems, some of the illicit arms fall into the hands of anti-Government forces and non-State actors. According to the Small Arms Survey, only a small portion of small arms are in the custody of State security institutions. The abundant supply of small arms and light weapons aggravates not only conflicts, but also acts of violence and criminal activities.

The problems caused by small arms and light weapons in the Central African region are not limited to issues of social instability; they undermine human rights, protection of women and children and socio-economic development. They pose a central challenge to human security, as my colleague from Uganda noted, and may even become a threat to peace and security in Africa.

Japan therefore strongly supports various efforts being undertaken at the national, subregional, regional and global levels to address the problem of illicit small arms trafficking. At the national level, it is important to implement the United Nations Programme of Action to Prevent, Combat and Eradicate the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects and the International Instrument to Enable States to Identify and Trace, in a Timely and Reliable Manner, Illicit Small Arms and Light Weapons. We hope that an action-oriented outcome document will be adopted at the forthcoming Fourth Biennial Meeting of States to Consider the Implementation of the Programme of Action, which is to take place in June this year.

We urge Member States to make efforts to submit national reports on the measures taken to implement the Programme of Action. It is absolutely essential for the States concerned to take responsibility for registering, controlling and managing small arms and light weapons and ammunition and to establish measurable goals as part of their national development plans.

At the regional and subregional levels, we encourage countries in the Central African region to expedite their efforts to establish a binding instrument on small arms and light weapons and ammunition, following the examples of other regions in Africa. It is particularly important to strengthen the management of national borders on the Gulf of Guinea as a common problem of the region. The Economic Community of Central African States may be a good forum for exchange of information and best practice with other regional organizations to extend and mobilize support for capacity-building.

At the global level, we need to the implement the 13 recommendations made by the Secretary-General in 2008 (see S/2008/258). They are all relevant to the Central African region. For instance, the Secretary-General recommended that plans for small arms and light weapons be integrated into peacebuilding and poverty reduction strategies, as a matter of priority. We also support Recommendation 9, on destruction of

surplus ammunition stockpiles, and we are actively supporting projects in that area.

Arms embargoes are necessary under certain conditions, and compliance is important to have the intended impact. Sanction monitoring groups, peacekeeping operation missions, relevant countries and regional organizations should cooperate closely. We look forward to the report by the Secretary-General to be issued this year.

In order to address the problem of small arms and light weapons in the Central African region, we need, first and foremost, priority actions on the part of the countries themselves. Such efforts should be matched by partnership and external support. There are various cooperative frameworks in the region. We wish for intensified efforts to strengthen collaboration and to adopt a comprehensive approach.

Japan places high priority on assistance to solve the problem of small arms and light weapons. In the last nine years we have provided $500 million in support of that. In the Central African region, where the problem of small arms is a major concern, we are engaged in projects in countries such as the Republic of the Congo, the Central African Republic and the Democratic Republic of the Congo to assist in the collection, destruction, stockpile management and control of small arms; in disarmament, demobilization and reintegration; and in capacity-building.

Japan is unique in the world in having a very clear policy not to export arms, particularly to countries involved in conflict or likely to become involved. We are committed to play a leading role in the fight against the illicit trade in small arms and light weapons. To that end, every year since 1995 — and, since 2005, joined by Colombia and South Africa as sponsors — Japan has submitted to the General Assembly a draft resolution on small arms and light weapons. We are pleased at the increasing support it has gained.

I wish to conclude by registering Japan's continued support for the global fight against illicit arms trafficking.

Mr. Araud (France) (*spoke in French*): I wish, of course, to thank the delegation of Gabon for having organized this discussion. A few days ago, when President Ali Bongo came to New York, he outlined his detailed plan for the prevention of conflicts. The problem of small arms and light weapons that we are addressing today is naturally closely linked to that.

The illicit manufacture and distribution of small arms and light weapons and of ammunition is one of the major threats to international peace and security. Millions of people have been their victims since 1945. Clearly, it is in this area that, if any progress is to be made, the issues of disarmament would be dealt with most fruitfully when it comes to security for all human beings.

Central Africa, sorely tried by conflicts for many years and victim of unstable land and sea borders, is particularly exposed. The example of the Lord's Resistance Army, composed of several hundred rebels, reveals the ability of armed groups to despoil entire regions and sow terror and desolation.

Apart from the impact on the physical safety of the people of Central Africa, small arms and light weapons have a long-term negative impact on the economic and social development of a region already beset by numerous development challenges. The trafficking in small arms and light weapons also contributes to prolonging conflicts. Illicit deliveries of arms in unstable areas are detrimental to efforts to achieve a negotiated settlement of conflicts and thus make peace difficult to achieve. They also impede the efforts of the Security Council and regional organizations in Central Africa.

The struggle against the illegal distribution of small arms and light weapons is an unequal combat. There is indeed a considerable disproportion between the several hundred thousand dollars that are sufficient to arm a rebel group and the human and financial costs for States and the international community of peacekeeping and disarmament operations or further initiatives for security sector reform. Those are the instruments available to us to end a crisis. Thus it is of capital importance that the problem of the distribution of small arms and light weapons be attacked at its root.

To fight the trafficking, it is necessary to mobilize States of origin and transit of these arms. That means enhanced surveillance of manufacturers and brokers and of air and maritime companies that are knowingly involved in the flow of illegal arms.

In order to prevent the circulation of such weapons from fuelling conflict, the Security Council has set up sanctions and embargo regimes, the

implementation of which is of capital importance. We urge all States to cooperate with the sanctions committees to ensure their follow-up.

The international community has also established legal tools to buttress the action of Central African States, and we must encourage their full implementation. I refer, inter alia, to the United Nations Programme of Action on Small Arms and the international disarmament conventions. We also lend our full support to the initiative of the Economic Community of Central African States for the establishment of a register of small arms and light weapons on a regional basis.

The future arms trade treaty, which we very much hope for and for which my country is sparing no effort, will also be an essential tool in stopping the destabilizing flood of arms. France counts on the support of its partners in the upcoming deadlines and in view of the conference in 2012 to draw up the treaty.

Initiatives to prevent conflicts and to maintain and keep peace also contribute to reducing the illicit traffic in small arms and light weapons. Disarmament, demobilization and resettlement programmes, for example, make it possible to reduce the number of arms in circulation. Supporting security sector reform helps strengthen the abilities of States to combat arms trafficking.

May I conclude by recalling that, in the fight against the dissemination of small arms and light weapons, my country has played its role. Since 2006 France has launched a series of regional initiatives in the framework of the Wassenaar Arrangement, the Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe and the European Union to prevent arms trafficking by private air companies. Regular reports submitted by European Union member States regarding implementation of the United Nations Programme on Small Arms provide an interesting experience with regard to actions that the Economic Community of Central African States intends to undertake at the institutional level within the framework of its subregional initiative. Finally, within the framework of European Union and Africa, we contribute, together with our European partners, to enhancing the capacities of African States to combat that trafficking by supporting the African training centre.

Mr. Salam (Lebanon) (*spoke in Arabic*): At the outset, allow me to join my colleagues in welcoming Ms. Asha-Rose Migiro and to thank Mr. Antonio Maria Costa and Mr. Louis Sylvain-Goma for their valuable presentations. I would also like to express my gratitude and appreciation to the delegation of Gabon for organizing this important debate on the impact of illicit arms tracking on peace and security, a subject well within the competence of this Council, which is mandated to maintain international peace and security. It is natural that we focus on the region of Central Africa, one of the areas most affected by the scourge of small arms.

Small arms are the most commonly used weapons in civil conflict, in acts of terrorism and in ordinary and organized crimes, so much so that they have been described as weapons of mass destruction because of the huge number of casualties they cause, especially among women and children. Unlike for chemical, biological and nuclear weapons, however, there is so far no international non-proliferation regime for small and light weapons.

Statistics indicate that more than 100 States Members of the United Nations possess about 1,000 arms factories that produce about 8 million pieces of weapons annually. The number of small arms in circulation is estimated to be about 700 million, which translates to one weapon for each 10 individuals in the world.

These weapons are a universal threat to humanity. They cause suffering and destruction in many regions, especially in Central Africa, which has witnessed so many wars that they have been described as a "world war" because of the huge number of casualties they have caused directly or indirectly. That region and its society continue to suffer the consequences, be it to economic development or at the humanitarian level, which hinder progress and delay the achievement of the Millennium Development Goals.

This year marks the tenth anniversary of the Bamako Declaration on an African Common Position on the Illicit Proliferation, Circulation and Trafficking of Small Arms and Light Weapons, as well as the Nairobi Declaration on the Problem of the Proliferation of Illicit Small Arms and Light Weapons in the Great Lakes Region and the Horn of Africa.

The problem of small arms cannot be handled merely through efforts to monitor them because it is an integral part of a wider context where conflicts

intersect with issues of security, violence, organized crime, human rights and development.

We are a few months away from the Fourth Biennial Meeting of States to Consider the Implementation of the Programme of Action to Prevent, Combat and Eradicate the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects in June. In this respect, Lebanon commends the efforts of the United Nations to contain the spread of small and light weapons and believes that they should be accompanied by efforts to address the root causes of crises and conflicts and to build effective institutions, as well as to eradicate hunger, poverty and illiteracy, which are principal causes of wars and conflicts in Africa.

Efforts to stop the spread of weapons should also be accompanied by encouragement of armed groups to abandon their weapons, to reintegrate their members, especially children, into society and to provide incentives and means to do so. In this regard, we commend the work of the many non-governmental organizations to achieve those goals.

Lebanon long suffered from the spread of these weapons and the ensuing destruction, especially in the years between 1975 and 1990. Therefore, we call for strengthening international cooperation to establish controls and ensure effective oversight and monitoring of the production of these weapons and their legitimate possession, storage, export and import.

Lebanon also calls for continued work to achieve common ground and an international consensus on a binding international instrument in this regard. Lebanon believes that this does not infringe the inherent right of States to individual or collective self-defence in the event of aggression against a Member of the United Nations, as stipulated in Article 51 of the Charter, or the right of peoples to resist occupation and to achieve self-determination.

Ms. DiCarlo (United States of America): I would like to express our appreciation to you, Mr. President, and to the delegation of Gabon for organizing today's debate on this important issue. I would also like to thank Deputy Secretary-General Migiro for her comments and presence today, and Mr. Costa and His Excellency Mr. Sylvain-Goma for their remarks.

Every year thousands of conventional arms worth millions of dollars flood illegally into every conflict zone in Africa, despite Security Council arms embargos. These ongoing weapons flows mean many thousands of deaths, millions of displaced persons and refugees, and billions of dollars spent on humanitarian assistance and emergency relief aid. The numbers are heartbreaking. United Nations-generated data suggests that conflicts fuelled by the illicit arms trade have left an estimated 14 million refugees homeless worldwide and 26 million people internally displaced.

The instability and insecurity born of these conflicts are massive obstacles to development. We all understand that Africa is harmed disproportionately by these trends. Of the 20 countries that experience the lowest levels of human development, all but one of them are in Africa and more than half of these countries have been shaken by significant levels of violence since 1990.

One stark example is the Democratic Republic of the Congo, where the transfer of arms into the eastern part of the country fuels a terrible conflict and threatens stability in the Great Lakes region. Indeed, a vicious cycle of underdevelopment and insecurity in Central Africa and elsewhere stokes conflict and illicit arms flows, and that in turn can thwart well-intentioned Governments and international actors working for progress.

To stem this tide of illicit arms, we must not only strictly observe and enforce United Nations arms sanctions regimes; we must also rigorously implement other international or regional instruments, as well as national export controls on arms flows to embargoed regions in Africa. Moreover, we should consider which controls are appropriate for arms transfers to conflict zones not subject to Security Council sanctions.

The United States is particularly proud of our extensive and rigorous system of export controls. We engage and assist other States, both bilaterally and through multilateral organizations and regimes, to raise their standards and to prohibit the transfer of capabilities to rogue States, terrorist groups and groups seeking to unsettle regions.

Conventional arms transfers are a crucial national security concern for the United States. We have always supported effective action based on the highest standards of responsibility to control the international transfer of arms. Indeed, we face questions of both law and responsibility here. Legal but reckless international transfers often fuel the illicit arms trade. For this

reason, the United States voted in the General Assembly last fall to support a strong and robust arms trade treaty.

We will actively support arms trade treaty negotiations so long as the United Nations Conference on the Arms Trade Treaty takes its decisions by consensus. This is necessary to ensure that all countries can be held to standards that will improve the global standard, to ensure the widest possible support for the treaty and to avoid loopholes that may be exploited by those wishing to export arms irresponsibly.

My Government is also dedicated to combating the illicit trafficking of small arms and light weapons through support for destroying stockpiles of surplus, poorly secured or otherwise at-risk weapons and munitions. Since 2001, the United States has funded the destruction of more than 1.3 million small arms and light weapons, more than 50,000 tons of ordnance and nearly 32,000 man-portable air defence systems in over 38 countries around the world, including six of the 11 States members of the United Nations Standing Advisory Committee on Security Questions in Central Africa.

The illicit arms trade hurts African countries disproportionately, but this issue should be a source of global concern. Illicit small arms can intensify and spread regional conflicts and the linkages among arms trafficking, narcotrafficking, terrorism and organized crime are very real. In the most basic sense, traffickers are traffickers. Narcotics traffickers, for instance, may very well use their established routes and networks to traffic in weapons or humans, should the situation present itself.

Given the stakes here, my Government is particularly pleased to be participating this June in the Fourth Biennial Meeting of States to Consider the Implementation of the United Nations Programme of Action to Prevent, Combat and Eradicate the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects. We join Chairperson-designate Ambassador Macedo in noting that the Meeting will be crucial to helping lay the foundation for a successful Review Conference in 2012.

Mr. Heller (Mexico) (*spoke in Spanish*): We are very grateful to you, Sir, and your delegation for having convened this timely open debate on illicit arms trafficking and its impact on peace and security in Central Africa. We welcome this opportunity for the Security Council to consider the pernicious effects of that criminal activity, which have been described in detail this morning by the Deputy Secretary-General, Mr. Costa and Mr. Sylvain-Goma.

My delegation will support the presidential statement to be adopted at the outcome of this meeting.

Illicit arms trafficking is undoubtedly among the most serious threats to peace and security in the current international context. On the one hand, it helps to strengthen organized crime and the illicit traffic in drugs, undermining political, social and economic stability in our countries. It also hampers peacebuilding in situations of institutional fragility. On the other hand, it is an obstacle to development and fosters the serious and systematic violations of human rights and international humanitarian law.

As we have stated in past debates of the Council on this issue, given the increasingly obvious link between drug trafficking and others manifestations of organized crime — such as illicit arms trafficking, money-laundering and terrorism — Governments and the international community must design strategies that enable them to address the specifics of any serious crime and to identify the common and convergent elements of such crimes in order to adopt a comprehensive approach. In this way, it will be possible to strengthen the rule of law and to clamp down on the culture of illegality and impunity throughout the world.

Of particular concern to Mexico, given the pernicious effects of arms trafficking, is the harm it causes to the civilian population. The price we pay for our inability to eradicate this scourge is measured in the human lives lost to it every day. It has been calculated that hundreds of thousands of people are killed every year by firearms, the majority of which are purchased on the black market. Thus, the effective implementation of resolution 1894 (2009) is of special importance.

It has been noted that Central Africa is among the regions that have suffered most from the destructive effects of the illicit traffic in weapons and ammunition and the irresponsible trade in weapons, in particular small arms and light weapons. The subregion has been shaken in recent years by protracted conflicts that have weakened the States of the region and, on occasion, impeded reconciliation and peacebuilding processes. Sadly, the subregion has seen the conflation of

practically all the pernicious effects of such activities, and weapons have circulated from conflict to conflict, regardless of borders or jurisdictions.

The complex nature of the problem highlights the importance of international cooperation to combat this global threat. Arms produced in one region of the world are sold illegally in another. It is of fundamental importance to recognize that the measures we adopt to counter the illicit traffic in small arms and light weapons and ammunition must be designed on the basis of shared responsibility involving States, international and regional bodies, and arms manufacturers, purchasers and users.

Over the past 10 years, the United Nations has devoted great effort and many resources to addressing the phenomenon under discussion. However, judging by the extreme availability of these weapons on illegal transnational black markets and in sorely affected areas such as Central Africa, we continue to face major challenges. Mexico believes that the United Nations must play a more active role in the debate on how to combat the scourge, not merely through its technical forums, but also by promoting high-level commitment to countering it.

In that regard, we now possess the mechanisms and instruments necessary to respond politically and legally to the challenges at hand. One such mechanism is the United Nations Programme of Action to Prevent, Combat and Eradicate the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects. The Fourth Biennial Meeting of States to Consider the Implementation of the Programme of Action will be chaired by Mexico in June this year. It will provide a new opportunity to adopt specific measures to enable us to advance in preventing and combating illicit arms trafficking. We invite States and other actors in our endeavours in this area.

In the legal sphere, we have global and regional instruments, such as the Inter-American Convention Against the Illicit Manufacture of and Trafficking in Firearms, Ammunition, Explosives, and Other Related Materials. In a more general context, we must stress the importance of the Palermo Protocol against the Illicit Manufacturing of and Trafficking in Firearms, their Parts and Components and Ammunition, to which there are now 79 States parties, as we have been informed today. We call on those States that have not yet done so to ratify or accede promptly to that important instrument.

We also welcome the progress made towards negotiating a possible arms trade treaty. We commend the efforts being made in Central Africa to establish a binding legal instrument for monitoring small arms and light weapons, ammunition and any material that could be used in their manufacture. We trust that these efforts will soon bear fruit. In that regard, we support the proposal to draft a subregional list of arms traffickers, which will make it possible in the future to initiate investigations and bring the perpetrators of such illegal activities to justice.

It is particularly important to consider the ways in which the Security Council can contribute, within its sphere of competencies, to the quest for better-designed and coordinated responses against this scourge. Thus, the Council, working closely with the General Assembly, the Peacebuilding Commission and other relevant United Nations bodies, must establish specific mandates for peace and peacebuilding missions. We therefore stress the importance of enhancing cooperation between the peace missions and integrated offices in the region — such as the United Nations Organization Mission in the Democratic Republic of the Congo, the United Nations Mission in the Central African Republic and Chad, the United Nations Integrated Office in Burundi and the United Nations Integrated Peacebuilding Office in the Central African Republic — and neighbouring countries in undertaking joint work on implementing disarmament, demobilization and reintegration programmes for ex-combatants of armed non-State groups and on security and justice sector reform processes.

Cooperation and information exchanges between the Security Council and regional and subregional bodies must also be strengthened. In that regard, it would be very useful to establish mechanisms for ongoing dialogue between the Council and the United Nations Standing Advisory Committee on Security Questions in Central Africa.

It is particularly important that the African Union and the Economic Community of Central African States promote among their members the proper implementation of the relevant resolutions of the Security Council. They should also put in place concrete measures to monitor borders or weapons-

crossing points and to investigate suspected embargo violations in States under sanctions.

The year 2010 offers an opportunity to make qualitative and quantitative progress in preventing and combating the illicit trafficking in small arms and light weapons. All of us — countries, organizations and civil society — will have a chance to join efforts and take part in important multilateral events, including the Biennial Meeting on Small Arms and Light Weapons, which has already been mentioned, as well as the high-level meeting of the General Assembly on transnational organized crime. We cannot waste those opportunities.

Mr. Barbalić (Bosnia and Herzegovina): At the outset, I would like to express my deep appreciation to the Gabonese presidency for convening this debate. I would also like to welcome Deputy Secretary-General Asha-Rose Migiro, Mr. Antonio Maria Costa, Mr. Sergio de Queiroz Duarte and His Excellency Mr. Louis Sylvain-Goma.

My delegation associates itself with the statement to be made later on by the representative of the European Union.

Bosnia and Herzegovina believes that the proliferation of small arms and light weapons poses a real and tangible threat to the security and humanitarian situation and the social and economic development of the Central African region. We are also deeply concerned about the impact that the illicit trade in small arms has on human rights, as small arms are being used by armed groups against civilian populations, in particular in terrible practices of child recruitment and gender-based violence. Furthermore, the illicit trade in small arms also represents one of the major obstacles to United Nations international troops who are seeking to establish or maintain peace and security. It can seriously undermine peacebuilding efforts, poverty reduction strategies and human security frameworks.

We therefore believe that particular attention by the Security Council is essential in order to end those serious violations of human rights and international humanitarian law and to provide an environment conducive to the effective implementation of the relevant United Nations peacekeeping and peacebuilding mandates.

Bosnia and Herzegovina underlines the importance of the full implementation by the States of the region of the Programme of Action to Prevent, Combat and Eradicate the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects, which was adopted on 20 July 2001 by the United Nations Conference. Furthermore, we believe that the adoption of the Code of Conduct for the Defence and Security Forces in Central Africa will be another practical step in confidence-building in the region. We therefore encourage Member States to act in that direction.

We would also like to call on Member States to make further efforts to elaborate a binding legal instrument and to develop modalities for its implementation, in order to ensure the monitoring of small arms and light weapons in the subregion.

Improving national transparency and oversight over light weapons through further harmonization and tightening of national legal frameworks regulating small arms and light weapons, including domestic laws on gun purchasing and ownership, require Governments to increase cooperation and information-sharing.

Adequate customs policies and strengthening national border controls to reduce illegal activities and to combat cross-border trafficking in small arms and light weapons is another area where regional cooperation is needed. The recent finalization and installation, in the United Nations Regional Centre for Peace and Disarmament in Africa, of software for regulating small arms and light weapons brokering in Central Africa is a good example of a concrete contribution to advancing regional networking and the monitoring of small arms flows.

Bosnia and Herzegovina would also like to stress the importance of cooperation among Governments of the Central African region aimed at the establishment of a register within the Economic Community of Central African States. Such a regional inventory could also supplement global efforts to expand the United Nations Register on Conventional Arms to include all light weapons and small arms transfers.

In that context, we would like to stress the importance of providing the necessary financial and technical assistance for the implementation of all activities related to the issue of fighting illicit arms trafficking in the Central African region. Creating a favourable security climate is one of the crucial prerequisites for the countries of the region to achieve the Millennium Development Goals and ensure

stability, self-sustainability and social and economic development.

The preliminary draft of the legal instrument presented at the twenty-ninth Ministerial Meeting of the United Nations Standing Advisory Committee on Security Questions in Central Africa, held in N'djamena, is a significant step. Once adopted, that legal instrument for the control of small arms and light weapons, ammunition and any equipment that could be used in their manufacture in Central Africa will address the crucial issues to which I have referred and provide a proper regional framework for tracking and securing the trade in small arms and light weapons in the region.

We very much hope that upcoming Ministerial Meeting of the Standing Advisory Committee on Security Questions in Central Africa, to be held in Kinshasa from 26 to 30 April, will result in concrete actions aimed at strengthening cooperation at the regional and international levels, thereby contributing to arms control and disarmament in Central Africa and to the achievement of lasting peace and stability in that region.

Mr. Li Baodong (China) *(spoke in Chinese)*: I wish to thank the delegation of Gabon for its initiative to convene this open debate on the impact of illicit arms trafficking on peace and security in the Central African region. I would also like to thank Deputy Secretary-General Migiro for her statement, as well as Mr. Costa, Executive Director of the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime, and Mr. Sylvain-Goma, Secretary General of the Economic Community of Central African States, for their briefings.

As indicated in the concept paper prepared by the Mission of Gabon for this debate (S/2010/143, annex), the proliferation of and illicit trafficking in small arms and light weapons is a destabilizing element that affects the security and humanitarian situation and the economic and social development of the Central African region. We are pleased to note that, keenly aware of the adverse impact of illicit arms trafficking on regional stability, peace and development, countries of the Central African region are taking active steps to respond to that scourge and have achieved some results.

However, the negative impact of illicit arms trafficking continues to be pronounced in the region. It cannot be neglected in any way. In that connection, I would like to emphasize three points.

First, we support Central African States in continuing their active efforts to combat illicit trafficking in arms. On the basis of the United Nations Programme of Action on Small Arms and Light Weapons and in line with its particular situation, each State may wish to draw up a complete set of rules and regulations on the production, possession, transfer and stockpile of small arms and ensure their effective enforcement. Countries of the region should also strengthen coordination and cooperation to effectively monitor the trade in small arms and light weapons and to combat illicit transactions. Regional and subregional organizations should play a greater role in coordination regional cooperation in that regard.

Secondly, we call for greater attention by the international community to the illicit trafficking in small arms and light weapons in the Central African region. Support for Central African countries in effectively combating the illicit traffic in small arms and light weapons will have a beneficial effect on reducing conflict in that region. Of course, in the long run the fundamental way to eliminate conflict is to help Central African countries develop economically, eradicate poverty and achieve sustainable development so as to root out the breeding ground for illicit trafficking in small arms and light weapons.

Thirdly, China believes that the Security Council should actively and steadily continue its work in this regard. In recent years, the Security Council has held many open debates and adopted presidential statements on the question of small arms and light weapons. In its consideration of questions on the protection of civilians in armed conflict; women, peace and security; and children and armed conflict, the Council has also stressed the importance of small arms and light weapons. In our view, the Council should coordinate its work in this field with that of other relevant bodies.

The Council must also continue to strengthen its cooperation with regional and subregional organizations, such as the African Union and the Economic Community of Central African States, in advancing peace processes in Central Africa with a view to creating an environment conducive to combating the illicit traffic in small arms and light weapons.

China has always been opposed to the illicit manufacture of and traffic in small arms and light weapons. We sympathize with the people of Central

Africa, who have suffered immensely as a result of the proliferation of small arms and light weapons. We are willing to work together with the international community towards an early and appropriate solution of this problem. We also wish to thank the Gabonese delegation for having drafted the concept paper (S/2010/143) and support the adoption by the Council of the draft presidential statement on the impact of illicit arms trafficking on peace and security in the Central African region.

Mrs. Viotti (Brazil): I congratulate Gabon on organizing this open debate. We also thank the Deputy Secretary-General for her remarks and her presence among us today. We appreciate the contributions made by Mr. Antonio Maria Costa and by Mr. Louis Sylvain-Goma.

The issue before the Council today is timely and appropriate. The consequences of arms trafficking and its threats to peace and security are troubling, as highlighted in the concept paper (S/2010/143) prepared for this debate. The international community should spare no effort in tackling such a challenge. As mentioned by Mr. Costa, the instruments to curtail the illicit arms trade are available. What is needed is their universalization and effective implementation.

Several important initiatives to address this problem have recently been adopted in different parts of Africa, including by national Governments, and in particular in Central Africa. In that region, the illegal trade of arms is a source of particular concern, given that some conflicts are still under way and given the severe impact on civilians, especially children and women.

However, the problem of arms trafficking is not exclusive to Central Africa. It concerns all of us. The review next June of the United Nations Programme of Action to Prevent, Combat and Eradicate the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects will provide an excellent opportunity to engage all Member States in strengthening this key United Nations programme.

Brazil has strongly supported the Register of Conventional Arms since its creation by resolution 46/36 L of 1991, and has regularly provided information on the Register's seven categories.

Brazil also supports a legally binding instrument that would allow States to identify and trace illicit small arms and light weapons in a timely and reliable manner. We have already incorporated the recommendations of the International Tracing Instrument, adopted in the context of the United Nations Programme of Action, into our national legislation. We believe that the United Nations Programme of Action should be expanded to also cover ammunition and explosives.

An arms trade treaty would also go a long way towards regulating the trade and curbing the illicit traffic in arms. We are actively involved in the negotiations and urge all countries to fully engage in the preparations for the 2012 United Nations Conference on an Arms Trade Treaty. In our view, the arms trade treaty must include objective and non-discriminatory normative criteria, which should be taken into account when authorizing arms exports. These criteria should be based on a balance of responsibility among exporting, importing and transit countries. It should also provide an explicit prohibition on shipments of arms without the authorization of the competent organs of the Government of the country of transit or destination.

In addition to the multilateral response to the problem of arms trafficking, regions affected should also strive to create stronger regulatory frameworks. We are pleased with the initiative of the Central African region to negotiate a legally binding instrument to monitor the trade of small arms and light weapons. The Economic Community of Central African States can provide important support to this initiative and mobilize in so doing the experience of the African Union, the Economic Community of West African States and the Southern African Development Community. Such an initiative is a step in the right direction that should also be supported by the international community as a whole.

The fight against the scourge of illicit trafficking of arms will also require addressing the demand side of the problem in all its dimensions, changing the culture of violence, improving the humanitarian situation and promoting democracy and development in the continent are the surest way to successful and sustainable results.

Finally, let me express my delegation's support for the draft presidential statement to be adopted by the Council.

Mr. Shcherbak (Russian Federation) (*spoke in Russian*): We thank Deputy Secretary-General Migiro; Mr. Antonio Maria Costa, Executive Director of the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime; Mr. Sergio de Queiroz Duarte, High Representative for Disarmament Affairs; and Mr. Louis Sylvain-Goma for their substantive briefings.

The Russian Federation has consistently supported enhancing the role of the United Nations in coordinating the efforts of the international community to address the problems of the illicit traffic in arms, in particular small arms and light weapons. Today's meeting highlights the Security Council's interest in supporting the efforts of Member States to develop overall approaches to combating the illicit trade in small arms and light weapons throughout the world. Of course, priority in this context should be given to those regions where the problem of illicit arms trafficking is particular acute.

My delegation thanks the Gabonese delegation for organizing today's debate, since the illicit arms trade is a major destabilizing factor for Central Africa. First of all, this concerns those countries in the subregion where there are ongoing threats to peace and stability. That situation appears to be further deteriorating because of the actions of armed groups using well-oiled channels for obtaining small arms and light weapons. This was mentioned in the briefings of our colleagues.

Russia has always supported robust measures in any circumstance in which weapons are supplied to illegal armed groups. The Security Council's arms embargos are, of course, a major tool in eradicating illegal supplies of weapons to conflict zones. To ensure the full effectiveness of such prohibitions, they must be steadfastly respected by all States. We express our support for individual and collective measures by countries of the region to combat the illicit trafficking in small arms and light weapons.

The Russian Federation has always stressed the importance of mobilizing activities in this area, not only at the international level, but also nationally and regionally.

In that regard, we welcome the implementation of the Sao Tome Initiative by the Central African States and the consideration, in the context of the ministerial meeting of the United Nations Standing Advisory Committee on Security Questions in Central Africa of the draft legally binding instrument on the control of small arms and light weapons in Central Africa, their ammunitions and all equipments that might be used in their manufacture. We believe that the adoption of that instrument would enable the countries of the subregion to further strengthen their efforts to combat the illicit trade in small arms and light weapons.

Efforts to address the issue of attempts to illegally supply of small arms and light weapons to conflict zones, in particular in Africa, and to eradicate the threat that such supplies pose to the stability of post-conflict countries are seriously hindered by the absence of a unified approach by the international community to counteract the illicit trade in small arms and light weapons. We believe that all efforts to address that scourge should be based on the relevant United Nations Programme of Action. We are convinced that it continues to be effective, and we should realize its full potential.

In that context, we look forward to the successful holding of the Fourth Biennial Meeting of States to Consider the Implementation of the Programme of Action in June. We also consider it important for all States, in particular those of Central Africa, to implement the International Instrument to Enable States to Identify and Trace, in a Timely and Reliable Manner, Illicit Small Arms and Light Weapons.

The Russian delegation appeals to the countries of Central Africa region to continue to pay close attention to the illicit trade in small arms and light weapons. Clearly, if that problem is not resolved, it will be impossible to achieve the full settlement of ongoing conflicts or to guarantee security, stability and sustainable development.

In conclusion, I would like to say that the Russian Federation supports the draft presidential statement on this issue, prepared by the delegation of Gabon.

Mr. Mayr-Harting (Austria): Let me join others in thanking you, Mr. President, and the Gabonese presidency of the Council for organizing this very important debate on a key topic that has particular relevance for the region of Central Africa. We are grateful for the interest shown in this matter by the Deputy Secretary-General. We appreciate the presence of the High Representative for Disarmament Affairs. We listened with great interest to what the Secretary General of the Economic Community of Central African States had to say.

However, let me also say a special word of thanks to Executive Director Costa. Since we joined the Council a year ago, we have had many occasions to listen to his presentations. For obvious reasons, we know his work well and I must say that what he told us today was once again a model of precision, clarity and frankness.

We align ourselves fully with the statement to be made by the representative of the European Union, but let me also add the following points.

Small arms and light weapons are commonly termed the real weapons of mass destruction, as they are responsible for an exceedingly high toll of human lives on a regular basis. According to the statistics that we have seen, they cause the deaths of more than 500,000 people annually — approximately 1,400 people per day. The vast majority of the victims are civilians.

As Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon stated on an earlier occasion, small arms facilitate a vast spectrum of human rights violations, such as rape and other forms of sexual violence, torture and the forced recruitment of children by armed groups or forces. In resolution 1894 (2009) on the protection of civilians in armed conflict, the Council noted that the excessive accumulation and destabilizing effect of small arms and light weapons pose a considerable impediment to the provision of humanitarian assistance and have the potential to exacerbate and prolong conflicts, endanger civilians, and undermine security and the confidence required for a return to peace and stability.

Today's draft presidential statement also underlines the fact that the illicit trade in small arms and light weapons fuels armed conflict and thereby has various harmful effects on the civilian population, including gender-based violence and the recruitment of child soldiers. As others have already said today, it is very clear that such challenges require a firm response at the national, regional and global levels.

For that very reason, we see the importance of the initiative of the Economic Community of Central African States to draw up a legally binding instrument on the control of small arms and light weapons, their ammunitions and all equipments that might be used in their manufacture. Mr. Sylvain-Goma gave us a detailed presentation on the various activities of the Community, but we very much believe that this core initiative deserves support. For that reason, we have also decided to support it financially, from an Austrian point of view. We look forward to the adoption of the legally binding instrument.

Furthermore, we support other important regional initiatives by African States aimed at fighting illicit arms brokering, such as the establishment of a register of arms dealers. We welcome the draft presidential statement to be adopted today and the fact that it acknowledges those two important Central African initiatives.

In that context, let me comment on the invaluable support provided by the United Nations Office for Disarmament Affairs, in particular the United Nations Regional Centre for Peace and Disarmament in Africa, in promoting and implementing those and other initiatives. The efforts of the Regional Centre aimed at preventing the illicit proliferation of small arms and light weapons deserve our full support.

The illicit flow of such weapons is a problem that goes beyond Central Africa and affects the whole continent. In 2007, my country co-organized an international conference in Ouagadougou, Burkina Faso, on peace and security in West Africa. The outcome document of the conference also envisioned the possibility of a pan-African convention on the control of small arms and light weapons — a vision that we continue to support wholeheartedly.

We are pleased that the European Union Africa Strategy comprises a segment on small arms and light weapons and that the first pan-African project in the fight against those weapons has recently been launched, with the support of the African Union. It is clear that such challenges as the fight against the illicit trafficking of those weapons require a firm internationally coordinated response. We need the cooperation of States and international and non-governmental organizations, which is also acknowledged in the draft presidential statement.

At the global level, Austria strongly supports the ongoing process towards an arms trade treaty, a legally binding international agreement establishing a set of basic rules to regulate the international transfer of conventional arms, including small arms and light weapons. Pending the adoption of such a global legal instrument, the United Nations Programme of Action to Prevent, Combat and Eradicate the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects

remains the only global forum and global instrument to prevent the illicit trade in such weapons.

Convinced of the need for African States to be actively involved and to participate in the upcoming Fourth Biennial Meeting of States to Consider the Implementation of the United Nations Programme of Action, which, as others have already mentioned, will take place in New York in June under the chairmanship of Mexico, we have teamed up with the United Nations Development Programme to provide support for African delegations to participate in that Meeting.

The proliferation of small arms and light weapons is closely interrelated with transnational organized crimes, such as the illicit trafficking of drugs or the illicit exploration of natural resources. This debate, therefore, is in line with the Council's efforts to tackle transnational threats to peace and security in a comprehensive manner. In that regard, we welcome the Council's call on Member States to accede to the United Nations Convention against Transnational Organized Crime and its protocols, and we commend the assistance of the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime in implementing those legal instruments.

In conclusion, Austria remains committed to assisting African States, in particular those of Central Africa, in building the capacities to counter and, eventually, to prevent the illicit trade in small arms and light weapons and the respective ammunition. We call on all Member States to support their efforts in that regard.

Sir Mark Lyall Grant (United Kingdom): I thank you, Mr. President, for initiating today's debate. This is an issue of serious concern to the United Kingdom. Like others, I should like to thank the Deputy Secretary-General for her introduction today and Mr. Costa and Mr. Sylvain-Goma for their contributions, and also to welcome the attendance of High Representative Duarte at today's debate.

The draft presidential statement before us addresses three key issues: action by the Central African subregion, the arms trade itself, and action by the international community in response. I should like to address these three issues.

First, I shall address subregional action. The United Kingdom believes that information-sharing and transparency help to tackle this illicit trade. Transparent systems are less vulnerable to manipulation by groups that view rigorous export controls as an obstacle to their self-serving goals. Closing gaps and addressing weaknesses in licensing procedures, end-use monitoring practices and other controls are essential measures for preventing diversion. It is easier to spot and correct diversions in transparent systems than in systems that are more opaque.

The establishment of a subregional register of small arms by the Central African States should be an effective step in our overall efforts to combat this illicit trade and should promote regional confidence-building, stability and security.

Secondly, with regard to the arms trade more generally, we acknowledge the right of States to legally trade in conventional arms for self-defence. However, we must ensure that robust transparency and control measures are in place to avoid arms being diverted to those who could use them to commit human rights violations and undermine peace and security.

To this end, the United Kingdom has played a leading role in developing a legally binding arms trade treaty that would set standards for the arms trade, ensuring respect for human rights and international humanitarian law while respecting a State's inherent right to self-defence.

Furthermore, arms embargoes imposed by this Council in the Central African region require the active cooperation of the Central African countries themselves to ensure their effective implementation. If those embargoes are to be effective in their purpose and deliver the improvements to the political and security environments that they have been introduced to achieve, any possible violations must be promptly reported.

Thirdly, the United Nations has a role. United Nations missions in the subregion are involved in disarmament, demobilization and reintegration work. Good practice in this area includes measures to prevent the proliferation of small arms and light weapons and to manage effectively the legitimate stockpiles of weapons held by States.

The United Kingdom Government is playing its part. We are providing funding to non-governmental organizations that are developing initiatives and mechanisms for enhancing controls and regulations on small arms and light weapons and arms transfers,

reducing conflict and promoting more effective and accountable security provision. We are also supporting non-governmental organizations that provide independent policy research and analysis on small arms and armed violence issues, for example in Burundi.

Through our support to the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) Crisis Prevention and Recovery Thematic Trust Fund, the United Kingdom has assisted efforts to control and curtail the supply of arms to conflict zones and fragile settings through civilian arms collection, surplus destruction and stockpile management, as well as enhancements to transfer and export controls. We have also supported UNDP's armed violence reduction work, which aims to inhibit the demand for arms and target the root causes of armed violence and community insecurity, for example by supporting armed violence prevention and community security programmes.

Every day, people are affected by the illicit trade in small arms and light weapons and their ammunitions. In the hands of criminal gangs or armed groups, as the Austrian Ambassador has just said, hundreds of thousands of people worldwide are injured and killed by them every year. Such violence destroys livelihoods, displaces entire communities and hampers social and economic development. The impact on peace, reconstruction, stability, security, human rights and sustainable development has been especially damaging in Central Africa. The draft presidential statement before us points the way for addressing this scourge and we strongly support the measures it contains.

The President (*spoke in French*): I shall now make a statement in my capacity as representative of Gabon.

At the outset, I should like to express my gratitude to the Deputy Secretary-General, who wished to participate in this debate, and to thank her for her important statement, which recalled the ongoing efforts of the United Nations to better organize the fight against illicit trafficking in small arms and light weapons.

I also welcome the presence of Mr. Louis Sylvain Goma, Secretary General of the Economic Community of Central African States (ECCAS), and thank him for his rich contribution to this debate, in which, as members will have noted, he underscored the scale of this problem in Central Africa, the susceptibility of the subregion owing to its numerous areas of lawlessness, as well as the cooperation initiatives being carried out by ECCAS member States with a view to better combating trafficking.

We further welcome the participation in this debate of representatives of other regional organizations, in particular the African Union and the European Union. Finally, I should like to thank various speakers for the kind words they expressed to the Gabonese delegation, and above all for their positive assessment of the topic and timeliness of this debate.

It is evident from all the statements we have heard that, from a broad perspective, the issue of illicit arms trafficking is new neither for the Security Council, nor for the United Nations in general. It will be recalled that the Council first considered this matter at a ministerial meeting held on 24 September 1999 at which it issued a presidential statement (S/PRST/1999/28). In 2001, the Council once again considered this topic, to assess its role in the United Nations Programme of Action to Prevent, Combat and Eradicate the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects of July 2001. That meeting also led to a presidential statement (S/PRST/2001/21). The representative of China correctly referred in his remarks to other meetings of the Council on this topic and others related to it. Since 2002, the Secretary-General has published no less than five reports on this matter. All these efforts of the Council and the Secretary-General were able to identify the measures to be taken at the international level to tackle the challenge of illicit arms trafficking.

In taking the initiative to organize this debate during our presidency, Gabon seeks to further engage the Security Council to take account of changes relating to illicit arms trafficking in the subregion and to consider innovative measures aimed at better combating and eliminating this scourge. Our hope is to see this debate trigger consideration in greater depth of ways to strengthen the implementation of the measures contained in the July 2001 Programme of Action and the International Instrument to Enable States to Identify and Trace, in a Timely and Reliable Manner, Illicit Small Arms and Light Weapons, as well as the various relevant resolutions of the Security Council.

As several speakers have stressed, the proliferation of weapons, in particular small arms and light weapons, has become one of the main concerns of

the international community because of the multiple negative consequences arising from this phenomenon. Indeed, the illicit trade in small arms and light weapons is a factor that destabilizes States in terms of security, humanitarian considerations and development. These weapons are also used as means for violating human rights, including in times of peace.

Because of the various crises and conflicts that regularly the world exacerbated by the illicit flow of small arms and light weapons, the United Nations organized, in New York in July 2001, the first Conference devoted to this question, which led to the adoption of the United Nations Programme of Action to Prevent, Combat and Eradicate the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects.

The Secretary General of the Economic Community of Central African States, Mr. Louis Sylvain-Goma, has rightly pointed out that Central Africa, which is one of the regions most affected by this phenomenon, has adopted measures to implement that programme. The countries of Central Africa also decided in May 2007 in Sao Tome and Principe to establish a legally binding instrument to control small arms and light weapons, their ammunitions and all components that might be used in their manufacture.

The next ministerial meeting of the United Nations Standing Advisory Committee on Security Questions in Central Africa, which will take place in April in Kinshasa, Democratic Republic of the Congo, will be devoted to consideration of that draft. With other countries of the subregion, Gabon is committed to enhancing national and subregional measures to combat the illicit traffic in small arms and light weapons and to strengthening confidence-building measures adopted within the context of the United Nations Standing Advisory Committee on Security Questions in Central Africa. Similarly, we are determined to enhance the transparency in weapons, including through the establishment of a subregional register of national stockpiles of small arms and light weapons.

Globally, Gabon is in favour of the drafting and adoption of an arms trade treaty establishing common standards in this area. Such a treaty would enhance existing international instruments against the illicit arms traffic. The draft presidential statement that has been negotiated, and which my delegation is submitting to the Council today for adoption, reflects our commitment to combating the illicit arms traffic.

I now resume my functions as President of the Council.

I call on Mr. Tete António, Permanent Observer of the African Union.

Mr. António (*spoke in French*): I would like to begin by commending the Gabonese presidency of the Security Council and to express, Sir, through you, our deep gratitude to the Republic of Gabon for its initiative to organize a debate on a subject of the utmost importance for the African continent. This initiative is part and parcel of the valuable service that your country has always rendered to Africa whenever our continent has been threatened or the peace of an African country jeopardized. The most recent visit to New York of President Ali Bongo Ondimba, who defended the highest causes of our continent and of peace in the world, only supports my words.

I would like to thank the Deputy Secretary-General for her briefing this morning, Mr. Costa for his presence, and Mr. Duarte, who plays an extremely important role in disarmament in Central Africa.

We all agree on the paradox that the African continent produces few weapons but is beset by the scourge of the illicit arms traffic, the consequences of which range from massive violations of human rights and international humanitarian law due to violence to the phenomenon of child soldiers and the traffic in small arms and light weapons, as well as to an almost endless list of such phenomena as terrorist networks and piracy in certain areas of the continent. Today, we heard from the Secretary General of the Economic Community of Central African States (ECCAS) of a new phenomenon — the role played by fundamentalist religious circles in the illicit traffic in small arms and light weapons in Central Africa.

Aware of all these threats, African countries have taken national, subregional and continental measures. What has the African Union done? As certain previous speakers have emphasized, the first African Union conference on this issue — the Ministerial Conference on the Illicit Proliferation, Circulation and Trafficking of Small Arms and Light Weapons in Africa, held in Bamako, Mali, in 2000 — adopted the African Common Position on small arms and light weapons. The Ministerial Conference recognized that the

proliferation of small arms and light weapons undermines good governance and economic development in Africa.

The Bamako Conference recommended that certain measures be taken, inter alia, the development and implementation of national programmes for responsible management of light weapons, the voluntary surrender of small arms and light weapons, the reintegration of demobilized people, the harmonization of legislation and the reinforcement of subregional cooperation. The Conference also launched an appeal for an international partnership to combat the proliferation and illegal traffic in small arms and light weapons. We are delighted that certain delegations, such as that of Austria, have emphasized the cooperation that the African Union has developed with many partners, including the European Union and the United Nations.

On the basis of the outcome of the Bamako Conference, the African Union has adopted other measures to curb illicit trafficking in small arms and light weapons. At the seventy-fourth session of the Executive Board, held in Lusaka in 2001 in advance of the adoption of the Programme of Action to Prevent, Combat and Eradicate the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects, measures were taken enabling Africa's active participation in the United Nation Conference held in 2001, at which the continent defended a long-term international partnership. Furthermore, in Windhoek, Namibia, the African Union adopted the Common African Position for the United Nations Conference of 2005. The Windhoek conference requested the African Union Commission to develop a binding legal instrument to prevent, combat and eradicate illicit trafficking in small arms and light weapons. In 2006, the Executive Council of the African Union adopted a global political framework on post-conflict reconstruction and development, identifying mines and light weapons as challenges to post-conflict reconstruction peace-building. The African Union continues its endeavours to meet its obligations in developing peacebuilding, to which the Secretary General of ECCAS referred today.

It is clear that the adoption of good strategies and action plans are not the main point. The main point is their implementation. As far as Central Africa is concerned, as we heard the Secretary General of ECCAS say today, the region has adopted mechanisms that should be supported, such as the Council for Peace and Security in Central Africa. The capacities of ECCAS itself should be strengthened, as should the International Conference on the Great Lakes Region. All these strategies must continue to be developed. It is also important for the United Nations Standing Advisory Committee on Security in Central Africa to enjoy the means necessary to continue to play an active role in tune with the needs of the region. We welcome the opening of a United Nations bureau in Central Africa, trusting that its mission will essentially to buttress subregional capacities.

To conclude, we believe that the issue of the illicit traffic in small arms and light weapons must be holistically analyzed in Central Africa. We think of the illicit exploitation of natural resources. For several years in that region, we have seen the illegal exploitation of natural resources. It is therefore high time that the phenomenon of the illicit exploitation of natural resources be fought with the same vigour with which we combat the illicit circulation of small arms and light weapons.

The African Union will spare no effort to implement all measures to make peace a daily reality for all the sons and daughters of Africa, a dream that is shared by countless men and women around the world and that we must hand down to future generations. We believe that the presidential statement to be adopted today will contribute to that goal.

The President (*spoke in French*): I thank Mr. Antonio for his statement. I now give the floor to the representative of Botswana.

Mr. Ntwaagae (Botswana): My delegation joins other delegations in congratulating you, Mr. President, on your assumption of the presidency of the Security Council for the month of March 2010. Botswana attaches great importance to combating the illicit trafficking in small arms and light weapons, and in this connection we welcome your initiative, Sir, to hold this open debate on the impact of illicit arms trafficking on peace and security in the Central African region. Let me also commend you for inviting representatives of regional organizations, all of whom, we believe, are crucial stakeholders in the subject matter of today's debate.

The illicit trade and trafficking in small arms and light weapons is a major threat to peace and security in Africa. The impact of illicit arms trafficking on peace and security in the Central African region is

particularly severe. Besides peace and security, other specific issues that arise from the problem of illicit arms trafficking are cross-border crimes, armed violence, and harassment of travellers, tourists and investors, both local and foreign.

My delegation aligns itself with the draft presidential statement on this subject, and we fully support its adoption later today and its recommendations. We also associate ourselves with the statement just delivered by the Permanent Observer of the African Union on this subject.

We agree that peace, safety and stability are essential preconditions for the achievement of sustainable development. This means that addressing the illicit trafficking in small arms and light weapons, which fuels armed violence and instability, will go a long way in promoting an environment conducive to development.

Clearly, the presence of arms that are unaccounted for not only contributes to heightened crime levels, but also provides an opportunity to undermine efforts to expand infrastructure and to deliver services throughout the length and breadth of national territory. It is therefore important that the international community step up efforts to prevent, combat and eradicate the illicit trafficking of small arms and light weapons, a challenge that has the potential to undermine a country's development prospects and the achievement of the Millennium Development Goals by the target date of 2015. Furthermore, arms that are unaccounted for impede the process of regional and Africa-wide economic integration and the people-to-people interaction that we all aspire to in that part of the world.

Botswana views the curbing of arms trafficking as a practical step towards attaining international peace and security, including in the Central African region. Such efforts deserve the full support of the international community, including through extending financial and other resources to countries in the region and strengthening the capacity of the subregional economic body, the Economic Community of Central African States, in the coordination of agreed measures.

Efforts by the subregion to implement confidence-building measures and establish mechanisms for the promotion of peace and security deserve the support of the international community. Botswana notes with appreciation the important role of the United Nations Standing Advisory Committee on Security Questions in Central Africa with regard to supporting the measure that I have just mentioned. We also welcome the proposed legally binding instrument on monitoring small arms and light weapons, ammunition and manufacturing equipment, which will be on the agenda of the thirtieth ministerial meeting of the Standing Advisory Committee, which is to be held in Kinshasa from 26 to 30 April 2010. Botswana urges the international community to lend its full support to this process and to also support the implementation of such a legal instrument once it is in place.

Botswana is committed to the full implementation of measures mandated by regional and international legal instruments, in particular the Programme of Action to Prevent, Combat and Eradicate the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects, the Bamako Declaration on an African Common Position on the Illicit Proliferation, Circulation and Trafficking of Small Arms and Light Weapons, and — in my subregion — the Protocol on the Control of Firearms, Ammunition and Other Related Materials in the Southern African Development Community Region.

We are pleased, Sir, that you have convened this open debate at a time when we are preparing for the fourth Biennial Meeting of States on Small Arms, to be held from 14 to 18 June 2010. This debate should serve to enrich our understanding of the issues in Central Africa in particular, which is one of the hardest-hit regions as far as the problem of small arms and light weapons trafficking is concerned, so that we will be better prepared to make meaningful contributions to the deliberations of that Meeting.

In conclusion, my delegation wishes to reiterate Botswana's commitment to the realization of peace and security in Africa as a prerequisite to development, dignified human existence, effective governance and the pursuit of prosperity. We cannot overemphasize the need for cooperation at the regional, bilateral and international levels in order to facilitate the successful implementation of our commitments under the various agreements. Botswana also supports the use of innovative measures and initiatives to deal with specific aspects of arms trafficking and the mitigation of its impact.

The President (*spoke in French*): I now give the floor to the representative of Chad.

Mr. Allam-mi (Chad) (*spoke in French*): I would first of all like to greet all the eminent speakers who made statements before me. I would also like to congratulate my brother from Central Africa, Ambassador Emanuel Issoze-Ngondet of the Gabonese Republic. He has not only shown competence and efficiency in presiding over the Council and thus brought honour to the States of the subregion, but also demonstrated his concern for the fate of our entire subregion by including on the Council's programme of work the serious issue of the impact of arms trafficking on peace and security in Central Africa. I would also like to thank, of course, Council members for having agreed to this proposal.

Illicit arms trafficking in our Central African subregion poses a permanent threat to the consolidation of the rule of law, democracy and economic and social development. Our capacity to ensure good governance, which is imperative, and a secure environment conducive to lasting economic and social development has been sorely tried by the illicit circulation in the subregion of arms of all calibre. This enriches traffickers who are frequently invisible and users of all sorts, from petty criminals to adventurers posing as revolutionaries and defenders of human rights to seize power, as well as road blockers and other highway bandits.

Obviously, peaceful citizens — men, women and children — are their primary victims. Our States, fragile and with limited human and other resources, find it difficult to combat these outlaws and to maintain order and security in order to meet our peoples' legitimate aspirations to more peace and security. The first thing that the international community must do is to help us by bolstering our material and human resources to combat illicit arms trafficking and its impact on peace and security in our subregion. We need help in revising and harmonizing our national legislation to international provisions, in establishing an arms database and checklist, and in national capacity-building to manage stockpiles and combat cross-border crime.

Chad welcomes the quality of the work that has been done in promoting peace and implementing our security policies under the auspices of the United Nations Standing Advisory Committee on Security Questions in Central Africa, the twenty-ninth ministerial meeting of which was held in N'djamena. I wish to emphasize that we have placed on the agenda of our forthcoming meeting in Kinshasa consideration of preliminary drafts of a legal instrument for the monitoring in Central Africa of small arms and light weapons, ammunition and any material used in their manufacture, and of an implementation plan for that instrument.

I would also emphasize that, in the context of subregional cooperation, in particular within the Economic Community of Central African States (ECCAS), we have established instruments for crisis prevention and management to that have proved to be very effective in helping us to implement our peace and security policies. The statement of the Secretary-General on that issue was very edifying.

The security situation in the region is well known. Successive civil wars, having undermined our young States and our security services responsible for enforcing regulations on the monitoring and movement of arms, have fuelled crime and the activities of arms traffickers in our subregion. Porous borders are difficult to monitor and allow illicit arms traffickers and users to move easily from one country to another. The lack of security arising from that situation is a major challenge that each of our States must meet, but one that we can also fight together with joint patrols involving two or several countries that share the same border. Such an effort must be complemented by relevant intelligence allowing us to identify and punish traffickers.

When States are responsible for illicit trafficking, firm and effective international sanctions are imperative. Moreover, if we are to obtain their cooperation, which is also necessary to that effort, our people must be made aware of the gravity of the situation so that we can collect illegally held arms.

With respect to Chad, the circulation of light weapons can be explained with reference to the repeated wars and disturbances that have shaken our country since its independence. Armed groups, supported from outside the country, have introduced weapons into the various regions and provided them to road blockers, poachers and other traffickers in the Sahel and the Sudanese border. In addressing this situation, and despite the vast area involved, the Government has carried out regular operations to recover those weapons, which are a source of insecurity and violence. In December 2008, we set up a

national disarmament commission that has recovered more than 10,000 weapons of various calibres.

We look to the future with optimism as political life of our country has considerably improved. We have normalized our relations with the Sudan, opening the way to improved bilateral cooperation to enhance security on our common borders. We also rely on the support of the international community in carrying out our disarmament, demobilization and reintegration programme so that ex-combatants from armed groups, particularly child soldiers, may legally enter public and private life. In that regard, we wish especially to thank the international community for having decided, at a time when we particularly needed it, to deploy the United Nations Mission in the Central African Republic and Chad to make the eastern region of our country more secure, as far as possible, in particular by strengthening our capacities through the deployment of the Detachement intégré de sécurité. We trust that we shall be able to go it alone in the future, but we rely on other sources of support from the international community to complement our human and other resources.

The President (*spoke in French*): I now give the floor to the representative of Morocco.

Mr. Bouchaara (Morocco) (*spoke in French*): I should like at the outset, on behalf of the Kingdom of Morocco, to congratulate you warmly, Sir, on your assumption of the presidency of the Security Council. You represent Gabon, a friendly and brotherly country with which Morocco has historic warm, deep-rooted and special relations at all levels. I also take this opportunity to congratulate you on your decision to have the Council debate the important subject of the impact of small arms and light weapons on security and stability in Central Africa, a region close to our hearts.

I also thank Ms. Megiro, Mr. Costa, Mr. Duarte and Mr. Sylvain-Goma for their important contributions.

The control of illicit arms trafficking is essential to maintaining international peace and security. The international community must therefore strive to reinforce the existing international regime on combating the proliferation and illicit trafficking of small arms. This legal framework but must be complemented by comprehensive and binding international instruments. In that context, my country believes that all regional and subregional policies to address this problem would benefit from having a robust international legal system to tackle the illegal trade in these destructive weapons and to mark them in order to ensure that the can be rapidly traced.

Of course, the establishment of such a legal regime took a major step forward in 2001 with the adoption of the United Nations Programme of Action to Prevent, Combat and Eradicate the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects, and in 2005 with the adoption of the International Instrument to Enable States to Identify and Trace, in a Timely and Reliable Manner, Illicit Small Arms and Light Weapons. The regime should now be enlarged and consolidated to encompass illegal brokerage and to limit effectively and efficiently the scale of the uncontrolled circulation of those arms and its impact on international and regional peace and security. Until that regime is strengthened, Morocco believes that the implementation of those instruments makes a crucial contribution to limiting the disastrous effects of the illicit traffic in small arms. Those efforts at the international level will no doubt have a positive impact on Africa overall, and on Central Africa in particular.

In that connection, despite its failure in 2006, the Review Conference served to emphasize the broad prevailing consensus on the importance and relevance of the Programme of Action, which has made it an essential point of reference for international action to regulate the circulation of light weapons. Moreover, based on that result, in 2008 the Biennial Meeting of States to Consider the Implementation of the Programme of Action was able to adopt a regional approach to the implementation of the Programme. The Conference also called for the convening of regional meetings to harmonize efforts to implement the Programme of Action, and acknowledged the importance of international cooperation and assistance for the effective implementation of that instrument. In that context, the June 2010 Biennial Meeting will be an important international gathering to consider the best ways to implement the Programme of Action.

The efforts of the countries of Central Africa should be recognized and supported. In that spirit, my country encourages the initiatives undertaken by the countries of the Central Africa to strengthen confidence-building measures and to develop a binding legal instrument and modalities for the control of these weapons at the subregional level, with the support of

the United Nations Standing Advisory Committee on Security Questions in Central Africa.

Moreover, the development in the context of the Economic Community of Central African States of an instrument similar to the Bamako, Nairobi and Economic Community of West African States conventions, declarations and protocols — aimed at setting up a legal and institutional framework to call upon the member States of the Central African subregion to harmonize their positions and pool their efforts to combat the traffic in light weapons — could be a useful avenue to pursue.

To that end, of course, it is necessary to strengthen the capacity of that subregional body to clearly identify the specific problems and needs of each member country. Moreover, it is necessary for the international community to provide meaningful support, including heightened assistance and cooperation, to the countries of the region that request it in order to allow them to confront the challenges posed by the illicit traffic in light weapons.

It was altogether logical for Morocco to join, from the outset, in the efforts of various countries that led to the adoption, in June 2006, of the Geneva Declaration on Armed Violence and Development. That initiative, whose relevance has been recognized by a growing number of countries, was perfectly in line with the efforts of the United Nations. In that regard, strengthening the international partnership to allow donor countries, development agencies and disarmament bodies to integrate the issue of armed violence into their programmes of action would make it possible to orient existing strategies towards an innovative and harmonized approach that is tailored to each situation and geared around targeted goals to address and prevent the underlying causes of armed conflict and to mobilize and channel the necessary development resources.

Addressing the problem of light weapons, whose worrying impact also touches upon the serious global threats posed by terrorism and transnational organized crime, is of crucial importance today and underscores the urgent need for the international community to provide a global response. There is no doubt that this type of debate in the Council contributes to strengthening the efforts of the international community in this area. We commend Gabon for its initiative to organize it.

The President (*spoke in French*): I now give the floor to the representative of Costa Rica.

Mr. Urbina (Costa Rica) (*spoke in Spanish*): I would like to begin by thanking your delegation, Mr. President, for organizing this debate. I would also like to express my gratitude for the statements by Deputy Secretary-General Migiro; Mr. Costa, Executive Director of the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime; and Mr. Sylvain-Goma, Secretary General of the Economic Community of Central African States. I would also like to welcome the presence of Ambassador Duarte, High Representative of the Secretary-General for Disarmament Affairs.

Costa Rica welcomes your delegation's initiative, Mr. President, to once again put the issue of illicit arms trafficking before the Security Council. We have reiterated before that the proliferation and illicit traffic in small arms has a negative impact on the security of people, exacerbates tensions, sparks conflicts, and often poses a genuine threat to international peace and security. One need not refer to the great number of injuries and deaths they produce, or to the costs required to address them, to conclude that the proliferation of and illicit traffic in small arms are problems that require the urgent and careful attention of the international community.

Costa Rica believes that the Organization has an inescapable duty to produce instruments to limit on the manufacture and trade in weapons. However, until it does, the issue of illicit arms trafficking should be the focus of the Council's attention, in particular with regard to specific situations such as those in Central Africa, a region that is acutely suffering from the damaging effects of the proliferation of small arms.

My delegation respectfully urges the members of the Council to support the initiative of the countries of that region to establish a legally binding instrument to monitor small arms and light weapons and their ammunitions at the subregional level. We also urge the ministerial meeting of the United Nations Standing Advisory Committee on Security Questions in Central Africa to draft instruments that ensure transparency in the manufacture, trade and traffic in weapons, contribute to the implementation of national weapons-marking programmes, and launch a monitoring and registration mechanism for existing weapons at the subregional level.

We believe it important to offer international support for any initiative that promotes an exchange of best practices among the countries of the region and ensures the full implementation of appropriate national legislation on these issues. In that connection, it is important to recall that the countries of the region must abide by their obligations under Council resolutions on arms embargoes. Greater interaction with the Council's sanctions committees and their experts' groups would contribute to the implementation of embargos and make it possible to meet the challenges posed by their implementation.

Costa Rica believes it necessary for the countries of the region to contribute actively to the effectiveness of the measures adopted by the Security Council. They should provide the required information on measures adopted to implement arms embargoes. In that regard, we find it especially worrisome that there is a lack of reports on the implementation of the arms embargo against the Democratic Republic of the Congo — information that is required under resolutions 1857 (2008) and 1896 (2009).

We also wish to reiterate the crucial responsibility of arms manufacturers to abide by weapons notification and transfer requirements imposed by the Security Council. They should also take every possible step to ensure that such weapons do not fall into the hands of criminals or are used for illegal purposes.

Costa Rica urges the international community to focus anew on the issue of the proliferation of small arms in Central Africa, by means of resources and equipment and programmes for capacity-building and institutional support. We believe that the donors who support security sector reform programmes and training for security forces should incorporate the effective management of stockpiles of arms and weapons into their programmes. Again, in those countries on which the Council has imposed an arms embargo, good stockpile management must be required for the transfer of arms and the provision of assistance by security forces.

Costa Rica believes it is important to include the subject of small arms in the mandates and reports of political peacebuilding and peacekeeping missions. This would give a positive signal that the Security Council is aware of its responsibility in such a serious matter. We also believe it necessary for the Council to continue buttressing disarmament, demobilization and reintegration activities, including destruction of arms, and reinvigorating sanctions follow-up measures connected to arms embargoes.

I will end by repeating that Costa Rica believes that the international community must adopt and implement measures to combat the illicit trade in weapons and must, essentially, strengthen substantially the regulation of any arms trade. The bodies of the United Nations must contribute to the achievement of that necessary goal.

Although undeniable progress has been made over the last decade, for example by adopting the Action Plan to Prevent, Combat and Eradicate Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All its Aspects, we believe that even more progress must be made through the adoption of legally binding instruments. My country has therefore supported and contributed to the consideration of a treaty on arms trading within the framework of the General Assembly. The absence of measures ensuring mandatory compliance with Security Council measures has led to norms that have not gone beyond mere repetition of principles, and that has proved to be of very little use.

The President (*spoke in French*): I now give the floor to the representative of the European Union.

Mr. Serrano (*spoke in French*): I would first like to thank you, Mr. President, for inviting the European Union to this important debate. I would also like to thank all those who have spoken, particularly the Deputy Secretary-General, Ms. Migiro, Executive Director Costa and the Secretary-General of the Economic Community of Central African States, Mr. Sylvain-Goma. Their statements help us better understand the scope of the problem.

The candidate countries Turkey, Croatia and the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, and members of the Stabilization and Association Process and potential candidates Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Montenegro, and Serbia, as well as Ukraine, Armenia and Georgia, align themselves with this statement.

The European Union (EU) is strongly committed to efforts to combat the stockpiling, uncontrolled spread and illegal trade of conventional arms. Besides the fact that they can fuel terrorism and organized crime, small arms and light weapons play a decisive role both in destabilizing and weakening States and

their social and political structures, and in triggering and spreading conflicts. They are a security problem for us all, and a major obstacle to the development of the affected countries.

That is why in 2005 the heads of State and Government of the European Union adopted a strategy to counter the illicit accumulation of and trafficking in small arms and light weapons and their ammunition. The strategy promotes a comprehensive approach and seeks to mobilize all the instruments that the European Union has at its disposal to tackle both supply and demand in the small arms and light weapons trade. Almost €500 million has been allocated to small arms and light weapons programmes since 1992.

In order to deal with the problems created by the illicit trade in and excessive stockpiling of small arms and light weapons, we continue to view the United Nations Programme of Action on Small Arms as the most appropriate multilateral instrument. The European Union is currently designing a programme that will support implementation of the Programme at the regional level by organizing regional seminars. Three of those will cover Africa and one will deal with Central Africa. The Union will support implementation by the countries of the Great Lakes region of United Nations technical guidelines for managing the stockpiling of conventional munitions.

The European Union strategy on small arms and light weapons has a universal scope, but it identifies Africa as the continent most affected. The adoption of the EU-Africa strategy, particularly the Peace and Security Strategic Partnership — one area of which is dedicated to small arms and light weapons — has made possible a major strengthening of our cooperation at both the continental and subregional levels, complementing the efforts under way at the national level. The first pan-African cooperation programme to combat small arms and light weapons has just been launched in cooperation with the African Union, the subregions and the Police Chiefs Regional Cooperation Offices. The aim of this project is, on the one hand, to strengthen the regional police offices' capacity to conduct the fight against arms trafficking in a coordinated way and, on the other, to raise awareness among national authorities and civil society so that they can intensify their efforts.

The European Union also supports the African Union's formulation of a small arms and light weapons strategy that will include guidelines for African Union action in this area. I would also like to recall here the initiative the European Union is currently developing to combat air transport of small arms and light weapons. That project, which identifies Africa as a priority region, seeks to develop software and good practices to enhance checks on airlines suspected of such trafficking.

The Central African region has not been spared, unfortunately, by the proliferation and traffic in small arms and light weapons. In this regard, the European Union supports the request of United Nations Standing Advisory Committee on Security in Central Africa to the Economic Community of Central African States (ECCAS) to draft a legal instrument on the control of small arms and light weapons and to produce an action plan and a code of conduct for security and defence forces in Central Africa.

The European Union firmly intends to support every commitment made in this regard. As Mr. Sylvain-Goma said this morning, the European Union already supports the ECCAS efforts to deal with the proliferation of small arms and light weapons, and we support the efforts of Central African countries to implement, at the national level, the Brazzaville Programme of Priority Activities, which is part of the United Nations Programme of Action.

The European Union is convinced that only a global approach to the problem of the proliferation of conventional arms can have a tangible impact on security. That is why we need to deal with the source of the problem by regulating international trade in conventional weapons through an arms trade treaty. The European Union is firmly convinced that a legally binding global instrument, in line with States' responsibilities under international law on this subject and establishing common international norms for the import, export and transfer of conventional weapons, will go a long way to combating the proliferation of such weapons, which is neither desirable nor responsible.

The Union is ready to work with all United Nations Member States to negotiate the terms of this international instrument within the framework of the negotiation process established by the General Assembly resolution adopted in 2009 (resolution 64/48). That process should take into account specific regional and national characteristics without

compromising the quality of the future treaty. In that regard, in 2009 the European Union encouraged discussion on a regional level through a series of regional workshops, two of which were held in Africa. We plan to repeat that initiative with regional debates on the political and technical aspects of a future arms trade treaty.

The European Union would like to take this opportunity to reaffirm its full commitment in the fight against traffic in conventional weapons, particularly on the African continent. In our conviction that the implementation of the EU-African Strategy can contribute to this goal, the Union is committed to pursuing its efforts to promote the implementation of a genuine architecture of peace and security in Africa.

The President (*spoke in French*): There are still a number of speakers remaining on my list. I therefore intend, with the concurrence of the members of the Council, to suspend the meeting until 3.30 this afternoon.

The meeting was suspended at 1.30 p.m.